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General Assembly

Sixty-fourth session

Official Records

9th plenary meeting
Saturday, 26 September 2009, 9 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Ali Abdussalam Treki ..... (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya)

The meeting was called to order at 9.10 a.m.

Agenda item 8 (*continued*)

General debate

Address by Mr. Gabriel Ntisezerana, Second Vice-President of the Republic of Burundi

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): The Assembly will now hear an address by the Second Vice-President of the Republic of Burundi.

Mr. Gabriel Ntisezerana, Second Vice-President of the Republic of Burundi, was escorted to the rostrum.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I have great pleasure in welcoming His Excellency Mr. Gabriel Ntisezerana, Second Vice-President of the Republic of Burundi, and inviting him to address the General Assembly.

Mr. Ntisezerana (Burundi) (*spoke in French*): It is an honour to take the floor at the sixty-fourth session of the General Assembly.

At the outset, on behalf of His Excellency Mr. Pierre Nkurunziza, President of the Republic of Burundi, and our entire delegation, we join preceding speakers in warmly congratulating you, Mr. Ali Abdussalam Treki, on your election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its sixty-fourth session. Your election is a tribute to you and to your country. My delegation and I personally wish you every success in your noble mission. Our congratulations go also to the other members of the Bureau. We also take this opportunity to pay a well-deserved tribute to your predecessor, His Excellency Mr. Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann, for his commitment and for the quality of the work accomplished during his mandate.

Here, we wish to reaffirm our support for His Excellency Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon. Once again, we wish him every success and assure him of the full cooperation of the Republic of Burundi in seeking peaceful and courageous solutions to the problems facing today's world. We hail him in particular for his devotion to the cause of peace and development, which he has continued to demonstrate for the world in general and for Burundi in particular.

Finally, our gratitude goes to the international community, the Peacebuilding Commission, the United Nations Integrated Office in Burundi, the European Union, the Regional Initiative for Burundi and the Republic of South Africa for their efforts to restore peace, which is now a reality and which we hope will be irreversible in Burundi. We urge all States in the Great Lakes region to continue to engage in dialogue and cooperation to ensure comprehensive political stability and development in the region. We take this opportunity to request that consultative status in the General Assembly be granted at this session to the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region.

The present session of the General Assembly is taking place at a time when the Burundian people are welcoming the progress made on the path of peace. Indeed, the war in Burundi is now over. The last rebel

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movement, the Forces nationales de liberation, has laid down its weapons and has become a political party that is actively participating in the country's democratic life. The movement's top leaders have been appointed to posts in the area of public administration. Some former combatants have joined the army or the police, and the others have been demobilized and are benefiting from the process of reintegrating into normal socio-economic life. We wish to thank all our partners for their support for Burundi's considerable peacebuilding and democratization efforts.

With the return of peace and democratically elected institutions, the Burundian people are beginning to regain confidence in the institutions of the Republic. Internally displaced persons (IDPs) are returning to their former villages, and Burundian refugees who were in neighbouring countries have returned. However, the reintegration of former combatants, IDPs and refugees is not taking place without difficulties or constraints.

Indeed, Burundi, as an African country with one of the highest population growth rates, has an acute land-shortage problem, which has given rise to property disputes. In order to preserve social harmony, a commission for land and other assets has been established to resolve all disputes arising between repatriated persons and their fellow citizens who have remained in the hills, where land is considered a unique treasure.

Burundi is facing the problem of financing the professional reintegration of thousands of men, women and even children who have served as combatants. The international community's support is thus essential to assist us in the process of socially reintegrating those sectors of the needy population so that the gains of peacebuilding will not be undermined.

Furthermore, the Burundian Government recognizes that illegal firearms in the hands of the civilian population constitute a serious threat to peace. In order to address that problem, the Government has established a commission to encourage people to voluntarily turn in their weapons. As the commission has a time-bound mandate, the Government has launched a large-scale programme to recover all weapons and clamp down on crime linked to firearm use. A decree regulating legal firearms possession has just been signed by the President.

Judicial reform is being carried out to ensure equitable justice and combat impunity. The Government welcomes the support of the international community in this area. To further consolidate the peace dividend, we must meet the challenges of knowing the truth so that we can achieve national reconciliation. It is imperative that the Burundian people succeed in the transitional justice process. That will enable them to bury the hatchet of war and build their future on a solid foundation of peace and mutual trust.

Mindful of the fact that it would not enjoy peace for long in a troubled Africa, our country has responded positively to the international community's appeal to contribute to peacekeeping in countries at war. Thus, Burundi is participating in the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire, to restore peace to Côte d'Ivoire; the United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office in the Central African Republic, in Chad and the Central African Republic; and the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur, in Darfur and Somalia. Unfortunately, our contingent deployed in Somalia as part of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) has, over a two-year period, been the target of three suicide attacks that have claimed the lives of 25 soldiers and left 35 others wounded. To that grisly toll, we must add three victims of the crash of an Ilyushin aircraft into Lake Victoria in March this year.

Those facts show that Burundi is paying a heavy price in the international mission to contribute to the quest for peace in Somalia. Because of this loss of life, some in Burundi are calling for a troop withdrawal. We believe that, in its current configuration, the Mission can continue and be completed only with considerable efforts by the international community.

To that end, the Government of Burundi believes that AMISOM's mandate should be changed to allow contingents to protect themselves against deadly attacks and to take the offensive or pursue aggressors, if necessary, in accordance with Chapter VII of the Charter. We believe that contingents must be equipped with sufficient resources in terms of quality and quantity. We believe that strike helicopters and funds for information-gathering on the ground must be provided. We also believe that additional troops should be deployed without delay in order to make the Mission truly continental in character. And we believe that the long-promised sanctions against countries,

organizations and individuals who support Islamist groups should at last become a reality.

The Government of Burundi remains steadfast to its commitments vis-à-vis AMISOM. However, we would like to see the international community respond as soon as possible to the concerns that I have expressed here, which are well-known to all partners who wish to see the return of peace in the Horn of Africa.

This meeting is taking place a few months before the holding of general elections in my country aimed at reinvigorating institutions at every level. I would like to underscore here that the Government is committed to making sure that those elections are transparent and that they are held in an atmosphere of calm. An independent national electoral commission has already been put in place, based on a political compromise between the various parties. In addition, a new electoral law has just been promulgated. The Ministry of the Interior has also been strengthened in order to support the commission. The partnership between the electoral commission, the Government and donors has just been formalized through an agreement between the United Nations Development Programme and the Government of Burundi on a project to provide support for the elections.

In that regard, the Government will provide the independent national electoral commission a $7 million package for the entire endeavour. We are counting on the varied support of the international community to mobilize all the necessary resources to make the electoral process a success. We welcome the willingness expressed by the Secretary-General to bring BINUB's mandate in line with the electoral environment. I need not recall that BINUB's mandate should be agreed between now and the end of December of this year. A successful outcome to the elections will enable us, in coordination with the Secretary-General, to redefine the mission of the United Nations in Burundi by focusing major attention on programmes aimed at lasting development.

Burundi must make a success of its electoral process if it is to be able to pursue its economic development. Our strategic framework to combat poverty, which is the point of reference for all efforts in that regard, has been in the process of implementation since 2007. An assessment of that effort over the past two years reveals satisfactory results overall, despite the fact that the performance indicators we wanted to achieve with regard to certain macroeconomic policies have not yet been realized.

In an effort to improve the effectiveness of the assistance provided to Burundi, the Government, working in partnership with donors, has put in place a partners' coordination group that provides a forum for discussion in which development partners are consulted on all technical and policy issues in connection with the implementation of our national strategy on development and peacebuilding. Today, genuine dialogue and active partnership take place throughout the process, from the planning to the results assessment stages.

With the support of the World Bank, Burundi hopes to hold a meeting of the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Burundi next month in Paris, with a view to mobilizing funds destined for sectors that have been identified as having the potential for quickly contributing to economic growth and playing a catalysing role — namely, those of the energy, agricultural, private sector, tourism, information technology and communication infrastructure sectors. We count on the existing partnership to provide the necessary financing.

The Government has come to understand that, in order to fully restart economic growth, it needs to promote good governance in the management of public affairs and further improve the business environment. To that end, the Government, with the support of its partners, has begun a series of reforms aimed at improving public finance management and facilitating private domestic and foreign investment in our country. A new investment law has therefore been promulgated, which the Government has adapted to bring it in line with the East African Community's model. A value added tax is already in place and an agency to promote investment will soon become operational.

Burundi aims to meet the challenge set at the international level to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, as underscored in the Outcome adopted at the September 2005 World Summit of heads of State or Government (resolution 60/1). We are pleased to inform the Assembly that, thanks to our policy of free primary education and health care for children under the age of five and pregnant women, Burundi is achieving results that merit support. For instance, thanks to that policy, the number of pregnant

women giving birth in hospitals or health centres increased from 22.9 per cent in 2005 to 56.3 per cent in 2008.

In July 2009, the Government of Burundi decided to provide free malaria treatment and mosquito nets for its entire population. The Government has also decided to take responsibility for the medical treatment and follow-up for women beginning in the first month of pregnancy, with a view to better protecting the health of mothers and children. That policy includes an information campaign aimed at curbing the number of births. A national body will soon be established that will be responsible for providing health insurance for people living in rural areas or working in the informal sector.

Education for all is another of the Millennium Development Goals that the people of Burundi are working to achieve. Thanks to community development efforts, our people built more than 700 schools and health centres in the course of 2008, so as to allow all school-age children to benefit from free primary education, as decided in 2005 by our country's President. However, we still face the ongoing problem of providing the necessary financial resources to equip those schools and health centres, provide them with drinking water and pay their staff. I need not point out that these exceptional steps have been taken to contribute to our country's progress in the run-up to 2015.

Moreover, the Government would like donors to mobilize additional resources to ensure the sustainability of our achievements. We would like to take this opportunity to heartily thank partners that have already supported the implementation of our policy to provide free primary education and health services for pregnant women and children under the age of five. We appeal to those who are still hesitant to come to our assistance in order to help us to overcome the numerous challenges to which I have referred here.

The global financial crisis has not spared Burundi. While the cost of raw materials has dropped in general, the decrease has been especially sharp in the price of coffee, which is our main export product. The Assembly will of course understand that, when our gross domestic product and our economy's macroeconomic indicators perform poorly, they undermine the social protection efforts undertaken by the Government.

The volatile market for petroleum products also has a destabilizing impact on Burundi's economy, as it produces external shocks that are difficult to bear. Despite the economic policy interventions that have been taken to counteract the negative effects of disturbances in international markets, the economies of developing countries must nevertheless reiterate the appeal for restoring order with regard to such current issues as those pertaining to the stability of international financial markets, the implementation of trade agreements, technology transfers and the need to increase assistance and investment in Africa.

Given the situation, we would like once again to invite developed countries and the Group of Eight in particular to translate into action the commitment they undertook to raise official development assistance contributions to 0.7 per cent of GDP by 2015, as well as to honour the promise made in Scotland to increase development aid by $50 billion per year starting in 2010, with half of this sum allocated to Africa.

Climate change constitutes a threat to peace and food security in Africa and around the world. We therefore call for the adoption of courageous measures to limit the production of greenhouse gases and for incentives to encourage reforestation policies, the protection of equatorial forests, the responsible management of water and energy resources, and the use of clean and renewable energies. Burundi endorses the common African Union position that was set out by the Prime Minister of Ethiopia and will be reaffirmed at the Copenhagen Conference. We welcome measures announced by President Barack Obama, the European Union and Japan to considerably reduce greenhouse gas emissions, manage toxic waste responsibly and provide financial and technological resources to least-developed and landlocked countries.

Burundi renews its pledge to the United Nations to continue working to ensure that the peoples of the entire world cooperate in peace and defend the values of freedom, solidarity and tolerance. These values must guide the international community in resolving the bloody conflicts that threaten some parts of Africa, the Middle East, Iraq and Afghanistan, and will help us to fight terrorism and other forms of transnational crime effectively.

I cannot conclude my address without reaffirming the commitment of my country to multilateralism,

which represents our single best hope for responding to all threats to peace and security in the world.

The President (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Second Vice-President of the Republic of Burundi for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Gabriel Ntisezerana, Second Vice-President of the Republic of Burundi, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by His Excellency Mr. Abhisit Vejjajiva, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Thailand

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Thailand.

Mr. Abhisit Vejjajiva, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Thailand, was escorted to the rostrum.

The President: I have great pleasure in welcoming His Excellency Abhisit Vejjajiva, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Thailand, and inviting him to address the General Assembly.

Mr. Vejjajiva (Thailand): On behalf of the delegation of the Kingdom of Thailand, I should like to extend to you, Mr. President, our sincere congratulations on your election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its sixty-fourth session. You may rest assured of the full support and cooperation of my delegation.

We live in one of the most challenging times in our history. As in the period before the founding of the United Nations more than 60 years ago, the world is again facing great challenges. Conflicts and tensions remain in many parts of the world; terrorists attack; poverty, disease and hunger still affect many; our supply of traditional sources of energy is dwindling; and climate change is transforming the very environment in which we all live. Added to this set of issues, the current global financial crisis makes for a future that seems bleak. But, like our forebears more than 60 years ago, we also live in hope for a better future. And a large part of this hope today rests upon the United Nations.

Despite criticism, we must never doubt the fact that the world has been better off with the United Nations than it would have been without it. I say this because overcoming the challenges we have faced and are facing demands multilateral cooperation. The United Nations has been the bedrock of such multilateral cooperation, as well as what the great poet Lord Tennyson termed a "parliament of man". And it is this parliament of man which provides a forum in which we can meet and discuss remedies to common challenges, as well as respond to the concerns of our constituents — the citizens of the world.

In the interdependent and interconnected world, no one nation, not even the biggest and the most powerful, can go it alone. But at the same time, no single nation should be left behind in our pursuit of peace, prosperity and the protection of human rights. Just as we join hands to face common challenges, we must also extend our hand to those less fortunate, pull them towards a brighter future and give them the opportunity to enjoy the fruits of globalization.

Thailand stands ready to extend a helping hand. We stand ready to share our experiences and the lessons we have learned from our own financial crisis in 1997. We believe that our nation's remedies to our problems can be shared and should contribute to the formulation of international remedies to common global challenges. Central to our belief is that peace, security, development and human rights are intertwined and must reinforce each other so that all three pillars are sustainable. This view is also central to the United Nations.

Thailand believes that moderation is the key to sustainability. We want to see moderation instead of excessive greed, which is the cause of the economic crisis; we want to see moderation instead of overconsumption, which is the cause of environmental degradation; and we want to see moderation instead of extremism and selfishness, which are the causes of conflicts around the world. We must therefore curb our excesses, live within our means and use our resources wisely.

This idea of moderation is an important pillar of the "sufficiency economy" philosophy of His Majesty the King. This philosophy should not be understood or misunderstood as advocating an inward-looking approach. Rather, it teaches us that economic development and modernization must be better balanced and take into account the well-being of the people and their economic, social, political and

environmental needs, so that the country is resilient and protected from both external and internal shocks.

His Majesty himself has applied his philosophy in practice, initiating numerous royal projects for the betterment of his people and country. His Majesty has been rightly regarded by the international community as the "development King". His Majesty received the United Nations Development Programme Human Development Lifetime Achievement Award in recognition of his achievements as well as of his sufficiency economy philosophy, which has gained increasing resonance worldwide. And many of His Majesty's projects are being replicated in many parts of the world.

The recent global financial crisis has shown that sufficiency economy is not merely a philosophy, but can also be translated into concrete action. Due to the lessons learned from the 1997 Asian financial crisis, most of Thailand's financial institutions have escaped the direct impact of the current crisis, thanks to their more prudent style of investment. Entrepreneurs have managed to weather the storm through rational decision-making and more careful risk management, two of the key principles advocated by His Majesty's philosophy.

My Government's socio-economic policy is guided by His Majesty's philosophy, which has been incorporated into our national economic and social development plan. Development for us is not just about the rate of growth, but also about the quality of that growth. Not only have we boosted Government spending and investment to jumpstart the economy, but we have also set up social safety nets, made educational reform a priority and upgraded our health and welfare services.

We have prioritized investment programmes and action plan to increase strength and to provide greater economic opportunities for people at grass-roots level. We have also laid the foundation for long-term growth and competitiveness in Thailand's various sectors, including agriculture, health care, education and tourism. In short, we have made Thailand's development a people-centred approach and Thailand's economy more immune from external shocks.

As the Chair of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), Thailand has led regional efforts to address today's financial crisis and to create immunity for East Asia as a whole. We are expediting the multilateralization process of the Chiang Mai Initiative, under the ASEAN+3 framework, comprising ASEAN member States, China, Japan and the Republic of Korea. The aim of this exercise is to build regional financial stability through a region-wide self-help substantive reserve pooling arrangement. This will come into effect very soon. As a region, we have also continued to liberalize trade and reject all forms of protectionism. We believe that these efforts can serve as examples for other regions to follow.

Today's financial woes affect not only a nation's economy but also the development and welfare of its people. This crisis exacerbates the problems that already exist, such as poverty, hunger and energy shortages. Nowhere is this more strongly felt than in the developing world, and Thailand is no exception. Although we have already attained the Millennium Development Goals in hunger and poverty alleviation, much remains to be done. Thailand understands well the challenges developing countries are facing and is prepared to share with others our experiences in managing and overcoming these challenges.

As a major agricultural economy, Thailand stands ready to contribute to the solution of the world food and energy crises. We are a major food exporter with strong experience and capability in developing alternative energy, especially biodiesel and ethanol. We aim to ensure a balance between growing energy and food crops so that both needs are sufficiently addressed.

Another pressing concern that can only be successfully tackled through global cooperation is climate change. My Government is convinced that the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change is the core for international negotiations and cooperation in this area, guided by the principles of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities.

In this connection, Thailand is honoured to host the United Nations climate change talks which will take place next week in Bangkok. We will spare no effort in ensuring that this round of negotiations will make tangible progress towards a successful Copenhagen Climate Change Conference in December.

Earlier this week, the Secretary-General convened the Summit on Climate Change. We welcome the commitments expressed by major economies during the Summit, in particular in setting clear goals and

targets for their action. I am also pleased to see the Group of 20 pledging itself to spare no effort to achieve a successful outcome in Copenhagen.

For its part, my Government has vigorously pursued environmentally friendly growth. That is why we have announced alternative energy as our national agenda and invested significantly to boost development in this field, including in energy crops. Moreover, one of Thailand's hallmarks is its strong biodiversity, from which Thailand and its local communities have drawn benefits through innovative economic activities and products. While we seek to benefit fully from our rich biodiversity and natural resources, we also aim to ensure that they are sustainable, regenerated and replenished.

It is not enough to ensure that the economic needs of the people are met. Their political needs are just as important. And there is no better political system than democracy to ensure the people's freedoms and rights. It is my Government's clear policy to sow the seeds of sustainable democracy by strengthening our democratic institutions, engaging civil society, ensuring human rights and promoting good governance and the rule of law. Democracy is not just about majority rule, but also about respect for minority rights.

At the regional level, under Thailand's chairmanship, ASEAN has made great strides towards making people the centre of the organization's development, as enshrined in the ASEAN Charter. Human rights issues are now at the forefront of ASEAN's agenda. Collectively, we have played an active role to create the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights, which becomes active this October. We are committed to doing our utmost to ensure that that body fully lives up to expectations.

Promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women are also important to Thailand. Besides our national effort on this matter, I am pleased to add that ASEAN is also in the process of establishing an ASEAN commission on the promotion and protection of the rights of women and children. This mechanism will play an important part in enhancing and strengthening the ASEAN human rights framework as a whole.

At the international level, Thailand is party to core international human rights conventions, and we are strongly committed to the principles enshrined in the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Thailand's candidature for a seat on the Human Rights Council for the 2010-2013 term is further testament to our commitment to enhance human rights internationally.

Thailand has consistently rendered humanitarian assistance to those in plight wherever they may be. We have steadfastly contributed to the World Food Programme. We have offered our helping hand to those in need. Our humanitarian commitment was clearly evident during Cyclone Nargis that befell Myanmar, as Thailand became the logistics hub for the massive international relief effort for that country.

Sustainable economic, political and social development is not a mere goal in itself. It ultimately ensures long-lasting peace and security. That is why ASEAN is moving towards becoming not only a political-security community but also an economic and sociocultural one by 2015. These three pillars reinforce each other. Within this political-security community, Thailand and its fellow ASEAN members are ready to enhance cooperation, from dispute settlement to conflict resolution and from peacekeeping to post-conflict peacebuilding, especially with regard to cooperation on training for emergency preparedness and humanitarian assistance. We hope that our regional efforts will help contribute to peace and security not only regionally, but also internationally.

Thailand itself has played a significant role in peacekeeping operations worldwide. In the past two decades, Thailand has provided nearly 20,000 military troops, police officers and civilian staff in support of United Nations peacekeeping missions on all continents around the globe, including Cambodia, Timor-Leste, Burundi and, soon, Darfur. We will continue to do so where our contributions can strengthen the overall capacity of the United Nations.

As a member of the Peacebuilding Commission, Thailand also strongly believes in building the right socio-economic and political conditions for sustainable peace in countries emerging from conflict and internal strife. We can play a greater role in ensuring international peace and security. That is why Thailand has presented its candidature for a non-permanent seat on the Security Council for the period 2017-2018. As a medium-sized developing country, we can represent the interests and concerns of developing countries not only in Asia, but worldwide.

Over the past four days, we have heard statements, one after another, which seem to point towards one conclusion, that is, that we are living in a "challenging period". And perhaps it is a period in which multilateralism is once again being put to the test. But we also have before us a historic opportunity to act together to right our past wrongs and to make the right decisions for the future. How we act today is purely our choice — a choice that will be judged by our children tomorrow and our grandchildren in years to come.

Our forefathers chose to establish the United Nations over six decades ago. We must now make sure that the United Nations — a symbol of true multilateralism — continues to be relevant, efficient and effective in responding to the evolving challenges as well as in ensuring development, freedom, human rights, and peace for all. In that regard, we support United Nations reform that will lead us towards those goals.

Let us use our gathering here to remind ourselves of what the United Nations stands for. And let us seize this opportunity together to lay down a stronger foundation for a new era of peace and prosperity for humankind.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Thailand for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Abhisit Vejjajiva, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Thailand, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by Mr. Jan Peter Balkenende, Prime Minister and Minister for General Affairs of the Kingdom of the Netherlands

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the Prime Minister and Minister for General Affairs of the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

Mr. Jan Peter Balkenende, Prime Minister and Minister for General Affairs of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, was escorted to the rostrum.

The President: I have great pleasure in welcoming His Excellency Mr. Jan Peter Balkenende, Prime Minister and Minister for General Affairs of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, and inviting him to address the General Assembly.

Mr. Balkenende (Netherlands): A few weeks ago, the Empire State Building was lit up in orange, the national colour of the Netherlands. The reason was that, precisely 400 years ago, the Dutch East India Company commissioned Henry Hudson to find a shorter sea route to Asia via the north. After a brutal voyage filled with hardships, Hudson decided to change course. He never found his shortcut to Asia, but he did become the first person to map the area around the river that would one day bear his name, including the place where we are gathered today. Ever since then, the origin of the great city of New York has been closely linked with the courage and resolve of Henry Hudson. Today more than ever before, we must make those qualities our own.

In the past year, we have faced the harsh reality of a financial and economic system on the brink. The crisis has been so severe and so rapid that courage and resolve are now required of us all — the courage to place shared values and interests above narrow self-interest, the resolve to adapt existing global governance structures to a new reality and the courage to make decisive choices that take account of all interests, especially those of the world's weakest and poorest people. That is my clear message to the General Assembly.

The Dutch Government has no doubt that a strong, decisive and efficient United Nations will be vital to that process. Only an integrated global approach will deliver the stability, solidarity and sustainability that the world needs so badly. The last few days in New York and Pittsburgh have shown that there is a clear realization that the world has changed and that we must work together more closely than ever before. Our interdependency gives us a shared responsibility. We can see now that the problems we face are too big for any single nation.

There is therefore strong will to address the underlying causes of the economic crisis, to work on systemic imbalances and to once again make finance a tool for growth. The agreement we reached in Pittsburgh on a framework for strong, sustainable and balanced growth is a big step forward. It shows that there is a widely shared conviction that we have much to gain from stability, solidarity and sustainability, both as individual countries and collectively. I would like to say a few words about each of those core concepts.

The current crisis offers clear proof that in a globalized world instability anywhere is a threat to stability everywhere. The international policy response has shown that that is widely understood in the financial and economic context. That is a positive sign, even if there is still a long way to go. The Pittsburgh agreement on compensation systems should end a bonus culture that has grown out of control. We cannot allow the greed of a few to endanger the jobs of many. We must therefore prevent that kind of crisis from ever happening again.

Mr. Valero Briceño (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Institutional reform should not stop with the financial and economic sector. There is a clear need for new arrangements that will allow us to manage a range of global governance issues at the same time. In the long term, the greatest threat to a stable world order is to allow the crisis to push the world's other great problems into the background: climate change, for example, the energy and food crisis or the pressing issues of peace and security, poverty and human rights. We cannot let that happen. In some cases, we simply have to honour commitments that we have already made, such as the Millennium Development Goals. In others, we need the courage to see beyond this crisis to the world of tomorrow, as we must show at the climate summit to be held in Copenhagen.

In any event, the current situation demands that we place our common global values and interests above our acute domestic problems, however serious they may be. Therefore, now more than ever, we need a strong, decisive and efficient United Nations. We need it here in New York, but we especially need it on the ground. In that context, I would highlight the vital importance of the One United Nations Initiative, which needs follow-up, and soon.

Stability cannot be achieved without respect for human rights. As friends of the Iranian people, we are concerned about the worsening human rights situation and the violent crackdown on popular protests. The Iranian nuclear issue represents a major challenge to international peace and security, to regional stability and to the non-proliferation regime. The recent revelation of a nuclear facility that was long kept secret is additional reason for great concern. It calls for a strong reaction by the international community and for total transparency by Iran. Iran must regain the trust of the international community, comply with relevant Security Council resolutions and contribute to peace and stability in the Middle East.

In June of this year, the United Nations showed leadership by holding a major conference here in New York on the effects of the crisis for developing countries. The Netherlands fully supported that initiative, as there can be no stability without solidarity. After all, there is nothing more destabilizing than poverty, hunger and a future without hope. The economic crisis and rising food prices are threatening to sweep away a great deal of hard-won progress. In 2009 alone, the number of people forced to live on less than $1.25 a day will grow by at least 55 million.

There is a real danger that those who had no part in causing the crisis will be the people who suffer most deeply. In rich countries the crisis means the loss of jobs and assets. In developing countries it means rising child mortality and rising hunger. Therefore, in rich countries the crisis is serious; in poor countries it is a matter of life and death.

Let the donor countries honour an old promise and set aside at least 0.7 per cent of their national income every year for development aid; and let the current crisis also inspire recipient countries to use the funds as effectively as possible. Now more than ever, public support for development aid depends on transparency, good governance and an effective fight against corruption.

I would also add that international solidarity is not simply a question of development budgets. It also concerns the private sector. More and more businesses now recognize the importance of corporate social responsibility. I believe there is still a world to be won in that regard, not only for society but also for companies themselves. Corporate social responsibility makes good business sense.

My third subject, sustainability, is essentially about making choices and sacrifices, not for our own sake but for future generations. This session of the General Assembly is our last major stop on the road to Copenhagen. We should be aware that the progress we make there will affect the lives of our children, our children's children and so on, down through the generations. That must be our main motive for seeking a radical change in the way we live.

In Copenhagen we must reach an ambitious, fair and comprehensive agreement. We must be ambitious and set our sights high. Therefore, at Copenhagen the Netherlands will call for worldwide carbon dioxide emissions to be halved from 1990 levels by 2050. We should be fair to developing countries. Every country should contribute to the common goal according to its means. Every country will be expected to play its part. But those that need help in designing and implementing sound adaptation policies must receive it. That is why the Netherlands has set aside €500 million to promote the use of renewable energy in developing countries.

Comprehensive also means that we should not simply pave the road ahead with good intentions, but with concrete agreements — for example, agreements on developing the global carbon market, on sharing knowledge and on financial arrangements. We simply cannot fail at Copenhagen.

The world is much smaller than it was in the days of Henry Hudson, but it is far more complex as a result. Any solution to the issues I have raised today starts with recognizing our mutual dependence and responsibility. Within the concepts of stability, solidarity and sustainability we will find the shared values and interests that should guide us on the road ahead. It is a road that requires courage. But to echo the words I heard recently from the Italian Nobel Prize winner and senator for life Rita Levi-Montalcini, on her one-hundredth birthday, "Don't fear difficult moments. The best comes from them." Let us go forward in that spirit.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Prime Minister and Minister for General Affairs of the Kingdom of the Netherlands for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Jan Peter Balkenende, Prime Minister and Minister for General Affairs of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by Mr. Igor V. Chudinov, Prime Minister of the Kyrgyz Republic

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): The Assembly will now hear an address by the Prime Minister of the Kyrgyz Republic.

Mr. Igor V. Chudinov, Prime Minister of the Kyrgyz Republic, was escorted to the rostrum.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I have great pleasure in welcoming His Excellency Mr. Igor V. Chudinov, Prime Minister of the Kyrgyz Republic, and inviting him to address the General Assembly.

Mr. Chudinov (Kyrgyz Republic) (*spoke in Russian*): At the outset, I should like to express our congratulations to Mr. Ali Abdussalam Treki on his election to preside over the General Assembly. We wish him the best for his work in leading the Assembly at its sixty-fourth session.

Given the sweeping changes occurring at all levels of global development, the role of the United Nations as a universal international forum is difficult to overstate. The contribution of all Member States to increasing the effectiveness of the United Nations can considerably contribute to strengthening international peace and security, development, human rights, environmental protection and sustainable development.

We believe continuing United Nations reform to establish an efficient mechanism to address contemporary challenges and threats is important for the further strengthening of the Organization's capacities and credibility. We call for broader representation in the Security Council and for improvement in its working methods. We propose expanding the number of permanent members of the Council by giving seats to Asia, Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean.

I would like to confirm that my country, being cognizant of our full responsibilities, is for the first time nominating itself as a candidate to become one of the non-permanent members of the Security Council, for the period 2012 to 2013. The Kyrgyz Republic, located in the heart of Central Asia, is taking an active part in maintaining peace and security, economic cooperation and environmental stability at both the global and regional levels. We are prepared to contribute as much as we can to the work of that key body of the United Nations.

The election of the Kyrgyz Republic to the Human Rights Council in 2009 illustrated the international community's recognition of our achievements in building a developed society. I should like to take this opportunity to thank Member States for their support of the candidacy of the Kyrgyz Republic. I assure them that Kyrgyzstan stands ready to make every effort to promote issues related to the protection of human rights and respect for the rule of law and

international law, as well as other issues on the Council's agenda.

The Kyrgyz Republic welcomes the decision of Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon to visit the Central Asian countries. We look forward to great results from that visit.

The overall situation in Central Asia remains complicated. In many respects, it depends on developments taking place in neighbouring Afghanistan. No one would today dispute the fact that there is a need to work out and apply fundamentally new comprehensive and viable approaches in the humanitarian, politico-anthropological and socio-economic sectors, which will ultimately contribute to the building of a strong and prosperous Afghan State. It does not appear to be possible to achieve a final and complete stabilization of Afghanistan by military means alone.

On 4 March 2009, President Kurmanbek Bakiev of the Kyrgyz Republic announced an initiative to establish at Bishkek, capital of the Kyrgyz Republic, a permanent forum and centre for hosting international conferences on security and stability in Afghanistan and Central Asia. This was called the "Bishkek initiative". We are convinced that this "Bishkek initiative" will become a forum of practical cooperation in the area of security, with priority on the problems of jointly bringing about peace, security and stability in the region, combating terrorism, separatism and extremism and countering illegal drug trafficking and cross-border organized crime.

Along with global challenges, every country faces its own specific problems. Addressing them will ensure that we move steadily towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

At the same time, in this era of globalization, existing problems have proven to be very closely interrelated. The Kyrgyz Republic, as a landlocked mountainous country and one of the world's developing nations, believes that the world community, under the leadership of the United Nations, can and must more actively assist in using the foreign-debt-swap mechanism to achieve sustainable development.

With respect to Kyrgyzstan, given the global economic crisis, we propose considering several options, namely, a swap of the Republic's debt for providing assistance to Afghanistan in pursuit of its socio-economic development, and a debt swap for the sustainable development of poor mountainous countries and the rehabilitation of uranium tailing ponds.

The Kyrgyz Republic calls for the active involvement in Afghanistan's recovery of neighbouring States that possess relevant scientific, industrial and agricultural capacities. Kyrgyzstan stands ready to take part in the restoration of communications, construction and the training of medical, educational and agricultural specialists. We are pleased to inform the Assembly that our country and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) signed an agreement on the development of a customs centre in the city of Bishkek for training Afghan specialists.

The General Assembly has adopted a number of resolutions on mountainous countries that contain analyses of their socio-economic situations and recommendations to international financial institutions, relevant United Nations agencies and Governments on how to assist them in overcoming obstacles to their sustainable development. The delegation of the Kyrgyz Republic, one of the initiators of a draft resolution on sustainable mountain development, would be grateful for support for that draft at the sixty-fourth session of the General Assembly.

We discussed problems related to planetary climate change at the high-level Summit of the General Assembly. Kyrgyzstan shares the opinion that environmental and ecological security problems are posing new challenges and risks in the twenty-first century. Kyrgyzstan will give highest priority to active preventive measures in the sphere of environmental protection as a foundation of its sustainable development and to maintain the balance between human rights, society, nature and the preservation of unique natural sites for our descendants.

The numerous uranium tailing dumps containing large volumes of the toxic waste of uranium production and other harmful technological wastes are of great concern to our region. They pose a grave danger to the health of the people and to the cleanliness of transboundary river basins and arable lands.

Kyrgyzstan is working tirelessly with other countries of Central Asia to draft international legal documents on the prevention of radiation pollution in Central Asia. Two framework documents have been adopted within the framework of the Treaty on the

Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons — one on the environmental danger of tailing dumps and the other on the creation of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia. I would like to inform the Assembly that the Treaty on a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Central Asia entered into force on 21 March 2009, and we appeal to nuclear Powers to support this Central Asian initiative and to sign the protocol on negative security assurances.

I am pleased to note that the High-Level International Forum held in Geneva on uranium tailings in Central Asia demonstrated a new model of effective regional cooperation aimed at practical resolution of this urgent issue. The great interest and concern expressed by all participants — including representatives of Central Asian and other States, international organizations and donors at the national, regional and international levels — give us cause for optimism. I take this opportunity once again to express my gratitude to all our partners at the Forum, the United Nations system, the United Nations Development Programme, the International Atomic Energy Agency, the European Commission, the Eurasian Economic Community, OSCE and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development.

In furtherance of the Forum agreement, the countries of Central Asia shall submit a draft resolution for consideration by the General Assembly on the role of the international community in the prevention of the radiation threat in Central Asia. We hope for timely action on the part of our international partners, donors and international organizations to address the problem of uranium tailing dumps and to provide sufficient financial, technical and other assistance to the region.

The challenges facing the United Nations are complex and demand consolidated efforts from all States. The representatives of the United Nations provide broad assistance to countries on a wide variety of issues. We appreciate their constructive cooperation on and support for Members' initiatives. The United Nations Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia, established in Ashgabat in December 2007, has already proven itself in a short period of time. The issues raised by the Centre are relevant and require prompt responses. We support the intention of the Centre to expand its representation in each country of Central Asia and request the appropriate committees take our views into consideration.

Central Asian countries pay considerable attention to water and energy problems. Despite the activities to increase the effectiveness of water and energy regulation in Central Asia, pursued within the framework of integration organizations and regional structures, rallying countries around this issue remains the most pressing problem in our region.

We believe that mutually beneficial cooperation is the basis for long-term intergovernmental cooperation in the water and energy spheres. It is essential to create conditions to improve incentives to store water in reservoirs during the winter and then to make it available for irrigating fields in the summer. If this proposal were pursued, the largest reservoir in Central Asia, on the Naryn and Syr Darya Rivers, the largest watershed of the region, would have the required stocks of water in times of drought and be able to provide water at least to maintain food and energy security for all the countries of Central Asia.

If decisions are taken only for short-term benefit, and water is depleted and regulating capacities are lost, that would inevitably have dangerous consequences for the entire region. These strategic issues can be solved only by merging the irrigation and energy schedules for supplying water and providing compensation fuel deliveries that should be the subject of intergovernmental cooperation among stakeholders. Water conservation technologies should also be exploited.

In conclusion, I would like to reaffirm the adherence of the Kyrgyz Republic to the goals and objectives of the United Nations aimed at ensuring peace and security and the welfare of all nations and peoples on the Earth.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Prime Minister of the Kyrgyz Republic for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Igor V. Chudinov, Prime Minister of the Kyrgyz Republic, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by The Honourable Apisai Ielemia, Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and Labour of Tuvalu

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): The Assembly will now hear an address by the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and Labour of Tuvalu.

The Honourable Apisai Ielemia, Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and Labour of Tuvalu, was escorted to the rostrum.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I have great pleasure in welcoming His Excellency Mr. Apisai Ielemia, Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and Labour of Tuvalu, and inviting him to address the General Assembly.

Mr. Ielemia (Tuvalu): I am greatly honoured to have this opportunity to speak in this body on behalf of the people and the Government of Tuvalu, who wish me first of all to convey their warmest greetings and felicitations to the General Assembly at its sixty-fourth session.

At the outset, let me associate myself with previous speakers in extending our special congratulations to Mr. Ali Abdussalam Treki on his election as President of the Assembly at its sixty-fourth session, as well as to reassure him of our support during his presidency. I also wish to highly commend his predecessor for his exemplary leadership and dedication to the work of the Assembly during his presidency over the past year.

As we begin the sixty-fourth session of the Assembly, the effects of the global financial and economic crisis loom over our heads. For a small island economy like Tuvalu's, which is highly dependent on the import of products from overseas, the impact of the global financial and economic crisis has been severe. The price of basic food items has risen dramatically. My people are suffering from events that are not of our making. The financial and economic crisis and its impact on development and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals is a global crisis that requires the cooperation of all countries. Unfortunately, as is always the case, it will be poor small countries such as Tuvalu that will have to bear the burden.

Globalization has also left its mark in the context of swine flu. Tuvalu has not been immune to that pandemic. We are grateful that the World Health Organization has issued a call to action to help poorer countries respond to the outbreak of swine flu. Outbreaks such as this highlight the need for trade reforms with respect to access to medicines. In that context, the right to health and access to affordable medicines should not be a right for rich nations only. Every human being has the right to a healthy life.

This year is a special one for the people and the Government of Tuvalu, not because of something that we have achieved and are proud to celebrate but, strangely enough, because of something that has happened for the very first time in the history of my country and that we strongly condemn. This has to do with the actions of pirates off the coast of Somalia. For four long months, 12 Tuvaluan seafarers were held captive by Somali pirates aboard a German-registered ship. Those brave Tuvaluan seamen were subject to various privations and will suffer the effects of that unlawful imprisonment for a long time.

The international shipping community cannot be held hostage to the demands of such thieves and criminals. This scourge must end. We strongly condemn that inhumane form of organized crime and strongly urge the United Nations and the international community to bring the pirates to justice through the application of the principle of universal jurisdiction, as well as to take immediate action to tackle the problem head-on. We also call on the United Nations to establish a special task force to address the issue of piracy.

The year 2009 will hopefully be a watershed in the global fight against climate change. In a few months, we will meet at Copenhagen to seal the deal on climate change. As the leader of one of the countries of the world most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, I hold out great faith for that Conference. But my faith will be diminished if key milestones are not achieved. Allow me to refer to some of those milestones.

First, the international community must commit to a rapid course of action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions so that global temperatures do not increase by more than 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels. Anything higher would be disastrous for Tuvalu. Global emissions must peak by 2015, and decline dramatically thereafter.

Secondly, while we work to develop a new climate change agreement in Copenhagen, we must not abandon the Kyoto Protocol, which is a cornerstone of action to address climate change. Let me repeat: we must not abandon the Kyoto Protocol. I fear that some countries are hoping that the Kyoto Protocol will disappear so that they can make weaker emissions-reduction commitments. I hope that will not happen, as it would certainly be a significant step backwards.

Thirdly, we need serious commitments from key greenhouse-gas-producing countries. The United States must take a leadership role and drastically reduce its emissions. I strongly appeal to President Obama to deliver a significant commitment on emissions reductions. We also call on key developing countries to dramatically reduce their emissions. Since the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change was developed, in 1992, the economies of a number of developing countries have grown rapidly. They must now contribute their fair share to emissions reductions.

Fourthly, we need a strong commitment in terms of financing and resources to help vulnerable countries build their resilience to the impacts of climate change. That means that we need a commitment to new money. It would be foolhardy to simply reshuffle existing overseas development assistance to support actions to address climate change. This is a new threat, and we must find new money to address it.

Fifthly, we need to reduce emissions resulting from deforestation and forest degradation, but in a coherent way. In that regard, carbon markets will not deliver climate change outcomes. We must develop new funds to carefully build the capacity of forested developing countries to reduce their deforestation rates. Whatever actions we take, we must ensure that the rights of indigenous peoples are properly protected.

The possible security implications of climate change on the livelihoods and well-being of the most vulnerable countries, especially small island developing States such as my own country of Tuvalu, cannot be ignored. Instead, they should be recognized and addressed vigorously by the United Nations as part of the collective efforts by all its appropriate subsidiary bodies.

Despite the concerns expressed by some Member States on the engagement of the Security Council on the issue of the security implications of climate change, I am pleased to note that the Assembly's resolution on the possible security implications of climate change (resolution 63/281), which was initiated by Pacific small island developing States more than a year ago, was finally adopted by consensus at a plenary meeting of the Assembly in June of this year. Tuvalu looks forward to the Secretary-General's report on the possible security implications of climate change, as required under that resolution.

Globalization has made Tuvalu a very vulnerable country. It is vulnerable to global economic shocks, highly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change and, not least, vulnerable to disease outbreaks. However, despite the wide recognition given and reiterated with regard to our vulnerability in many different United Nations forums, such as the Rio, Barbados, Mauritius and Johannesburg conferences and in several major United Nations events, including the Millennium Summit, the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council have not taken it seriously into consideration when addressing the question of Tuvalu's graduation from least developed country (LDC) status.

We strongly believe that Tuvalu's economic and environmental vulnerability, like that of any other LDC and small island developing State (SIDS), cannot be totally ignored, especially in view of the impact of the current economic global crisis. Although we are pleased to welcome the latest decision of the United Nations Committee for Development Policy not to recommend Tuvalu for graduation from LDC status for the next three years, we continue to appeal to this Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and our development partners to carefully reconsider and review the criteria and graduation rules for LDC graduation. We strongly believe that no LDC that is recognized as highly vulnerable should be forced to lose its LDC status.

One of the priority areas highlighted in the President's statement at the opening of the sixty-fourth session of the General Assembly is United Nations reform and democratization. We could not agree more, especially on the necessity and importance of the reform and revitalization of the General Assembly and the Security Council to enable them to fulfil their roles comprehensively.

We commend the progress of the intergovernmental negotiations on the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and other related matters. We fully recognize the need to restructure and expand the Security Council to reflect a fair and balanced representation of all regions. In this context, we believe that small island developing States should be allocated a seat on the Security Council.

As a full Member of the Organization, Tuvalu is proud to be part of the United Nations family and enjoys a sense of ownership through the establishment

of a long-overdue United Nations joint presence office in Tuvalu in May this year. Although we appreciate its establishment, we hope that it will not create another layer of bureaucracy among United Nations implementing agencies, but that it will be more responsive to the aspirations and needs of Tuvalu in a more coherent, efficient and effective manner. More importantly, it is crucial that the office focus on the establishment of more concrete development projects on the ground for the benefit of the people of Tuvalu rather than mostly on enabling activities.

I am compelled again to draw the attention of United Nations Member States to the plight of the people and Government of Taiwan. As a proud nation of 23 million people, Taiwan must be given the right to self-determination — a principle that must be upheld by the United Nations. Taiwan also has all of the hallmarks of nationhood. It has a democratic system of Government and it is certainly a responsible international player in world trade, development and diplomatic relations; not least, Taiwan has a clearly defined territory.

Although Tuvalu appreciates the long-overdue courtesy finally accorded to the Government of Taiwan to participate as an observer to the World Health Organization's (WHO) World Health Assembly this year, Tuvalu strongly believes that Taiwan deserves to participate more fully as a member of WHO and other United Nations specialized agencies. Tuvalu therefore reiterates its strong appeal for Taiwan's aspirations and desire to participate meaningfully as a full member of the specialized agencies of the United Nations to be given the proper and urgent attention they deserve.

In conclusion, my Government acknowledges with full confidence that globalization and its impact in every corner of the globe cannot be denied. This makes the role of the United Nations even more important. However, we need to conclude the long-overdue reforms of the United Nations, especially the Security Council and the General Assembly, to enable the Organization to deliver its services in a more transparent, coherent, efficient and effective manner.

We must work together to rebuild the global economy. We must work together to combat climate change, with special recognition given to the plight of the most vulnerable countries, especially the LDCs and SIDS. Not least, we must work together to ensure that everyone enjoys a healthy life. We will continue to support the United Nations and sincerely hope that it will not abandon the concerns of a small island country like Tuvalu.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and Labour of Tuvalu for the statement he has just made.

The Honourable Apisai Ielemia, Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and Labour of Tuvalu, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by The Honourable Patrick Manning, Prime Minister of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): The Assembly will now hear an address by the Prime Minister of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago.

The Honourable Patrick Manning, Prime Minister of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, was escorted to the rostrum.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I have great pleasure in welcoming His Excellency Mr. Patrick Manning, Prime Minister of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, and inviting him to address the General Assembly.

Mr. Manning (Trinidad and Tobago): In circumstances like these, I would normally speak for about an hour, but I would like to assure you, Sir, and the Assembly that the quality of mercy is not strained and that I will be considerably briefer than that. Today, I propose to stay within the time allotted to me.

Trinidad and Tobago extends its sincerest congratulations to the President on his ascension to the stewardship of this sixty-fourth session of the General Assembly. We know that his vast experience and leadership qualities will ensure very successful deliberations. We also pay tribute to his predecessor, Mr. Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann of Nicaragua, for his vision and fearless discharge of his responsibilities as President of the Assembly at its sixty-third session.

We convey our very best wishes to Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, whom we welcomed to Port of Spain earlier this year when Trinidad and Tobago hosted the fifth Summit of the Americas. We assure him of our continuing support as he pursues his

mission to ensure that the United Nations meets the new challenges of the twenty-first century.

We meet at a time of very serious challenges for the world economy. We are now beginning to emerge from a global recession caused by a near collapse of the international financial system, but there is no room for complacency. Unemployment continues to grow in almost every country, credit remains contracted and consumer confidence, that most critical factor, persists at very low levels. Additionally, there is no certainty of a steady upward trajectory for the global economy. Valued opinion on this matter points to the possibility of further recessionary trends before the present green shoots produce flourishing green fields.

We clearly cannot take our eye off the ball. We must not return to business as usual. We should not countenance the resurfacing of discredited patterns on financial streets and capitals. We must be wary of the level of adventurousness in leading financial institutions that contributed very significantly to driving the world to the edge of an economic precipice from which we are just starting to pull back. There is justification for concern about this situation in every country on this planet. In the globalized economy, we are all affected by policies or actions that direct the international financial system.

We of the smaller countries and the developing world have always been the most vulnerable and the worst affected. It is happening again. Especially in the southern hemisphere, the prospects have grown for increased poverty, unemployment and general slippage in the development process. How much longer will this acute vulnerability of so many nations persist? How many more dreams must now, once again, be deferred?

The trust of the world in the totally unregulated market has been entirely misplaced. We must now capitalize on the opportunity of this crisis and, without delay, reform our international economic system. The global architecture must be transformed to take the new realities into account. Among these are new and emerging centres of economic power and the now indispensable need to deliberately generate growth in the developing world if the global economy is to achieve resurgence and sustainability. In this extremely interconnected world, it is our collective resources, ingenuity, productivity, markets and technology that will keep all of us afloat.

Let this General Assembly therefore play its part in ensuring that we leave behind the old approaches that suffocated development of the many for the benefit of the few. Let it call for greater recognition of the absolute need to bring into the global mainstream the entire productive and purchasing capacity of this planet, our collective home.

We are heartened by developments and decisions among the countries of the Group of 20, but we must ensure that there is absolutely no reversal of the new approach; no dimming of the new light that the present crisis has generated; and no diminution of the acceptance that we are all in this together and that development everywhere translates into prosperity for all. Let us therefore ensure that the reform of international financial institutions does indeed take place; that we entrench greater sensitivity to the varying needs of countries at differing levels of development; that new voices, respecting and representing more of humanity, are in the decision-making process; and that resource flows for trade and investment are in fact realized and activated.

The Caribbean Community (CARICOM) has not been spared the debilitating effects of the current global economic situation. Most CARICOM States are now experiencing economic contraction and rising levels of debt and unemployment, with their challenging social consequences. It is therefore regrettable that some middle-income countries, such as many in CARICOM, may not be eligible for funding under some of the World Bank's facilities for international development assistance.

Given their vulnerabilities, middle-income countries' need for access to concessionary financing must not be underestimated. This was highlighted in 2008 at the Third Ministerial Conference of Middle-Income Countries in Namibia, which called for enhanced levels of international development assistance and noted that the current categorization does not accurately reflect the particularities and needs of these nations. This General Assembly must take steps to advance the cause of middle-income countries in this matter.

The situation in Haiti is one of grave concern. We are encouraged by the diverse United Nations-related initiatives aimed at promoting peace and security in that country, but greater attention is required by the international community. Arising out of the Fifth

Summit of the Americas, Trinidad and Tobago has advanced a proposal for the establishment of a hemispheric development fund for Haiti, to which all western hemisphere countries would be expected to contribute. Haiti is first and foremost a western hemisphere challenge, and we see this fund as essential to the re-establishment of proper standards of living in that country. We bring this matter before the General Assembly for its support.

One of the very significant problems facing the global community is transnational organized crime of increasing strength, which includes terrorist activity as well as the illegal traffic in drugs, arms and persons. The Caribbean is particularly plagued by the illegal drug trade, which uses our region as a trans-shipment route for its pernicious cargo headed northwards. This activity has a corrosive effect on our small societies, fuelling, for example, trafficking in small arms and light weapons, with troubling consequences.

In CARICOM, we have been pooling our resources for this fight. There is now unprecedented cooperation among the legal and security systems of our countries, but we need more resources in our struggle with this menace. We will continue to engage in the various processes of the United Nations aimed at addressing this problem. We encourage those Member States that have not been supportive of the initiative aimed at negotiating a legally binding arms trade treaty to join those States working to ensure that it becomes a reality.

But the security situation has been aggravated by the deteriorating economic situation in many of our countries, weakened by the loss of preferential markets for bananas and sugar. The situation is exacerbated by the new paradigm of reciprocity in trade, and by the fact that both the tourism industry and the financial services sector, to which many have turned to supplement their economic development, have not produced the anticipated returns. The economic situation of these countries has therefore become even more critical, with severe consequences for the security and prosperity of our region, given the inextricable link between security and socio-economic development.

Climate change is one of the major challenges facing our civilization today. The Secretary-General must be highly commended for his commitment to dealing with this issue, which he declared as a priority at the start of his tenure. In this regard, we add our voices to those that have praised highly the United Nations Summit on Climate Change, which has just concluded. This General Assembly must promote more meaningful action directed towards an internationally acceptable formula for the reduction of carbon emissions.

Trinidad and Tobago wishes to make it absolutely clear that we do not accept the per capita basis for the determination of levels of carbon emissions. It is manifestly unfair to a small, energy-producing developing country like ours with a small population. We consider the method of absolute emissions to be a more just method of determining a country's contribution to global warming, since it is affected not by per capita emissions, but by absolute levels. The question of population size, in this context, has nothing to do with the matter whatsoever.

We also assure the Assembly that our country has already voluntarily embarked on reducing emissions through a programme that includes the pursuit of renewable sources of supply. We will also be hosting the 53 Commonwealth heads of Government at a meeting in Port of Spain in November of this year. This will be the last major summit before the Copenhagen Climate Change Summit in December. We propose to use the opportunity to attempt to forge a consensus that would reflect the common views of the Commonwealth, comprising as it does both high greenhouse-gas emitters and some of the countries most threatened by climate change. We are determined to do all in our power to ensure agreement in Copenhagen.

We are firmly of the view that non-communicable diseases demand the heightened attention of the international community at this time. It has been forecast that by 2020 non-communicable diseases will account for approximately 73 per cent of global deaths and 60 per cent of the global burden of disease. We join the call for indicators on non-communicable diseases and injuries to be integrated into the core monitoring and evaluation system of the Millennium Development Goals. We have taken this matter on board at the level of the Caribbean Community. Indeed, we held a special regional summit in Port of Spain on chronic non-communicable diseases in 2007. I now propose that this Assembly convene a special summit meeting of the United Nations on non-communicable diseases at the earliest opportunity.

The year 2015 is fast approaching, but there has been, sadly, no encouraging progress towards our Millennium Development Goal of food security for all by that date. Indeed, we have fallen behind in our schedule, with an increase in deaths from hunger and malnutrition in the developing world. A much greater sense of urgency is needed in our approach to this situation. All countries must honour their commitments made at the 2008 High-Level Conference on World Food Security. Trinidad and Tobago therefore looks forward to the next World Summit on Food Security, scheduled for November in Rome, with the expectation that the results will aid the international community in achieving the revised target set by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations to eradicate hunger by 2025.

My country is committed to an international order based on peace, security and the right to development of all countries. We believe that democracy and representation are key to achieving meaningful and effective multilateralism. We therefore wish again to support efforts to reform the Security Council. Reform of that important organ of the United Nations, responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security, must include efforts aimed at making its composition reflect more closely the global geopolitical realities since the end of the Second World War.

In this new century, the United Nations must become an even more effective voice for all of mankind. We have very important work ahead of us at a very challenging time in our history. Let us never lose sight of our main purpose, which is the security and development of the people of the world. Let us renew our focus on this main objective.

Let us therefore support the reign of fundamental freedoms and human rights in every country. Let us strive for the individual empowerment of citizens in every nation; let there be opportunity and upward mobility for all; let none be marginalized on the periphery; and let the abundant talent and potential of humanity flower everywhere, serving as inspiration, guidance and example to present and future generations.

Let us therefore join our strengths for the benefit of all. Let us indeed build a global community where there is increasing and intensified cooperation and communication among our nations, where no country lags behind, and where all nations and their peoples are on the international road to development.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I thank the Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago for the statement he has just made.

The Honourable Patrick Manning, Prime Minister of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by The Honourable Tuilaepa Lupesoliai Sailele Malielegaoi, Prime Minister of the Independent State of Samoa

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): The Assembly will now hear an address by the Prime Minister of the Independent State of Samoa.

The Honourable Tuilaepa Lupesoliai Sailele Malielegaoi, Prime Minister of the Independent State of Samoa, was escorted to the rostrum.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I have great pleasure in welcoming His Excellency Mr. Tuilaepa Lupesoliai Sailele Malielegaoi, Prime Minister of the Independent State of Samoa, and inviting him to address the General Assembly.

Mr. Malielegaoi (Samoa): The value of the United Nations to humanity has not diminished with the passing of time. Our Organization remains as relevant today as when it was established 64 years ago. Its status as the world's pre-eminent body will be diminished if we as leaders do not accord it the respect our Organization deserves and observe its etiquette.

Recent crises have not only validated our global sustainability, but highlighted our interconnectedness and interdependence. These crises, from those in food and energy security to the global recession and pandemic, have adversely affected all Member States to varying degrees. Although they have resulted from the decisions and actions of a few, the crises have not differentiated in impact between developed and developing countries or between the rich and the poor. The costs of these crises in terms of human suffering and social upheaval have been considerable, and justifiably required the collective and concerted global action that now seems to be working with a good degree of success.

These crises are eminently solvable and short-term when compared to the great and grave threat the world faces from environmental degradation and climate change. This week's summit of the Alliance of Small Island States and the Secretary-General's high-level meeting both underscored the predominance and urgency of the climate change challenge. Their core messages were unambiguous. Climate change is not a future phenomenon; it is real and already occurring in Pacific countries and low-lying islands elsewhere. It is no longer a question of when, but rather of how severe the magnitude of its impact will be. The full cost society must bear is becoming a stark reality that we can no longer ignore today.

Climate change is not a concern of small island developing States alone. Our vulnerability to climate change should not absolve those responsible for its causes in the past or now, nor should it be used to shift the burden of leadership and responsibility away from the main carbon emitters. Developed and emerging economies will all be affected one way or another. Sadly, the human and financial costs will be borne disproportionately by small island developing States.

A Copenhagen climate pact is therefore a must. It requires a new brand of cooperation and a broad outlook. The narrow pursuit of self-interests and the use of economic and political expediencies should be set aside and must not be allowed to derail the goal of concluding an ambitious and binding agreement. Climate change is also everyone's job. While acknowledging historical responsibility is legitimate, allowing it to get in the way of making decisions to reach a comprehensive agreement would be a grave mistake. Reaching a climate change agreement is therefore a test of multilateral solidarity.

Time is running out. The impacts of climate change are getting worse daily. Playing the blame-and-shame game, or waiting to be led but not being willing to lead, are no longer options. For no single nation, no single group of nations and no single organization can win the war against climate change on its own. The divergent yet inextricably linked interests of Member States demand that we seal a deal in Copenhagen.

The cost of adaptation and mitigation at the national level can be prohibitive because most of our people and infrastructure are found along the coastal areas. Relocating them inland would be costly due to our rough and rugged terrain and the number of people involved. However, that has not deterred us. Using our resources and by partnering with the international community, we continue to support the global effort to build our resilience against climate change. Our plantation access roads programme is one such initiative. It facilitates relocation and helps boost agricultural production as a response measure to climate change and to food security.

The shadow of the financial crisis envelops us still. As with climate change, most developing nations are victims forcibly drawn into the maelstrom of the crisis through its consequential impact on the global economy. Although remote from the epicentres of the crises, our small and vulnerable island economies have not been spared. Indeed, it has been acknowledged by the Group of 20 that the global recession impacts the vulnerable and poorest countries disproportionately. International acceptance of the collective responsibility to provide assistance to help those countries mitigate the impact of the global recession has also been very important.

That undertaking to provide assistance is simply critical for small and open economies like that of my country. The global recession has contracted our small economy, and our narrow Government revenue base has taken some hard hits that have made it impossible to provide on our own the kind of stimulus package that would meaningfully mitigate the impacts of the recession, let alone reignite growth in the economy.

In the circumstances, the effective assistance needed by our economy at this time is direct budgetary support, which should be necessary only for the short term to sustain expenditure, allow us breathing space to rebalance our finances, and put the economy back onto the path of growth. We acknowledge with appreciation the readiness of our development partners and of international financial institutions, such as the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank, to sympathetically consider our requests in that regard.

Samoa will graduate from the list of least developed countries in December 2010. The intervention of the financial crisis was unanticipated and not taken into account when the decision was made to advance our country to the transitional period. An extension of the transitional period is therefore both necessary and justified.

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) will be reviewed next year. Our scorecard on all eight

Goals gives us guarded optimism, although meeting every one of them in the time frame allowed remains a challenge. Our needs are not matched by the resources at our disposal. Hence, central to our efforts to realize the MDGs is the implementation of Goal 8 on achieving durable global partnerships for development. But some aid donors either take their time to respond or do not do so at all. That is cause for justifiable alarm because if they are not forthcoming with relatively modest resources to help us achieve the MDGs, then the prospects for an effective global response to climate change will all but vanish.

The Pacific is a region of relative peace. We have been spared the scars of war and conflict, and nature has gifted us the sea and land for our livelihood. While we have challenges and differences, they tend to be localized. Our development needs, individually and regionally, are modest by world standards. However, belying that tranquillity is our acute economic vulnerability.

Given our credentials as a region of relative stability with needs that are not as large as those of other parts of the world, one would expect the international donor community to be jostling for opportunities to assist our development efforts. On the contrary, that has not been borne out in the general experience of the region. Some development partners seem unconcerned as to where and how their development aid is spent; whether it is in war-torn, devastated and unstable regions or as a front to support military-related industries at home appears to be of no consequence. Then, there are those who engage in posturing and rhetoric that are devoid of tangible or real action on the ground.

Sustainable partnership is based on mutual trust and respect. That has been the foundation of Samoa's relationship with our main development partners: Australia, China, the European Union, Japan and New Zealand. All have supported us and continue to do so at every step of our development journey. Italy, Austria and Turkey are our newest partners, assisting in the renewable energy field, and we would like to engage countries at the cutting edge of renewable energy technology, such as China, Germany, Japan and the United States, to assist us in that key sector.

The One United Nations Initiative is a timely project that reduces the costs and improves the efficiency and effectiveness of aid delivery by the United Nations system. Resources saved through that Initiative should flow back to benefit Member States.

A permanent solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict continues to be an elusive goal, and seems a lost cause. President Obama's relaunching afresh this week of the stalled Middle East peace talks will hopefully be the catalyst that brings about renewed impetus in achieving a secure State of Israel living alongside a Palestinian State.

Mr. Christian (Ghana), Vice-President, took the Chair.

International terrorism is a global menace. It creates an atmosphere of collective fear and intolerance. It preys on the innocent, vulnerable and defenceless and disrupts any progress towards peace and development. Terrorism in all its forms and manifestations should always be condemned unreservedly. Individual actions by States cannot in and of themselves provide a solution. We must shoulder our responsibility to act together to meet the threat through concerted multilateral action, which underpins the spirit of our Organization.

Wars are futile and serve no useful purpose. They will not end unless disarmament, nuclear non-proliferation and illicit small arms and light weapons are brought under effective control. The task of building peace lies with every nation. That is why we welcome the decision by the United States to move forward with the ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. We remain hopeful that the Treaty will enter into force soon.

The United Nations cannot survive unless it constantly adjusts and adapts to changing times. After 18 years, Security Council reform has finally entered the intergovernmental negotiating process. Samoa continues to support the expansion of the membership of the Council in both the permanent and non-permanent categories. Countries such as Japan have the credentials to assume permanent member status.

United Nations peacekeeping operations around the world have brought relief and hope to victims in conflict areas. Samoan civilian police officers are currently serving in three peacekeeping missions side by side with officers from other Member States. In our own region, Samoa is a contributor to the Regional

Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands under the umbrella of the Pacific Islands Forum.

Let me conclude by wishing the President well in the formidable challenges facing his presidency. When nations stand united and firm in pursuit of the goals of the Organization's Charter, the world can look to the future with confidence.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Prime Minister of the Independent State of Samoa for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Tuilaepa Sailele Malielegaoi, Prime Minister of the Independent State of Samoa, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by The Honourable Sheikh Hasina, Prime Minister of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

The Acting President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the Prime Minister of the People's Republic of Bangladesh.

The Honourable Sheikh Hasina, Prime Minister of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, was escorted to the rostrum.

The Acting President: I have great pleasure in welcoming Her Excellency Sheikh Hasina, Prime Minister of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, and inviting her to address the General Assembly.

Sheikh Hasina (Bangladesh): With your permission, Sir, I would like to speak in Bangla, my mother tongue.

(*spoke in Bangla; English text provided by the delegation*)

I would like to warmly congratulate the President on his well-deserved election to preside over the General Assembly at its sixty-fourth session. I am confident that his wise and able leadership will guide the Assembly's deliberations to a successful conclusion. I would also like to express my deep appreciation to His Excellency Mr. Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann, President of the General Assembly at its sixty-third session, for his sound leadership in successfully steering the Assembly's work during his tenure. I should also like to pay tribute to Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for his tireless and dedicated efforts to reinvigorate the United Nations.

Thirty-five years ago, the father of our nation and my father, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, in his first address to the General Assembly from this rostrum, expressed his gratitude to all who supported our struggle for independence. He also declared his commitment to democracy, good governance, human rights and the rule of law. It is also my proud privilege and great honour to extend the same commitment here today on behalf of our country.

As members may know, for many years following the brutal assassination of Bangabandhu and 18 other members of our family, on 15 August 1975, by misguided armed mutineers, Bangladesh was ruled by dictators and quasi-dictators. Aside from a period in the 1990s, the country continued to suffer from unconstitutional rule, particularly in the most recent years. Even I was sent into forced exile. But the will of the people of Bangladesh and the good will of the international community permitted my return home and the holding of nation-wide elections on 29 December 2008.

Universally acclaimed as free, fair and credible, and carried out under the supervision of United Nations and international observers, the elections heralded democracy in Bangladesh. The resounding victory of my party, the Awami League, reflected the people's preference for democratic ideals, secularism and an outright denial of all forms of extremism. The elections included record high participation by young voters and women.

The huge mandate given by the voters to my Government also entrusted it with an equally huge responsibility for delivering on people's expectations. Consequently, my Government has embarked on achieving a digital Bangladesh by implementing its Vision 2021 election manifesto. Our goal is to transform Bangladesh into "Sonar Bangla" or "Bengal of Gold", as envisioned by Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

Despite all odds, Bangladesh is making great strides in its socio-economic development. Education, particularly for girls, is a priority of our Government, receiving the largest single share of our annual budget. Our Government has pledged to ensure 100 per cent student enrolment at the primary level by 2010. Accordingly, primary education has been made free —

with free books — and compulsory for all children. Provision has been made for free education for girls up to the twelfth grade, and stipends are provided for girls in rural secondary schools.

As for the Millennium Development Goals, Bangladesh has been successful in removing gender disparities in the net enrolment of boys and girls in primary and secondary schools. Our Government is now planning to provide free tuition for girls up through the secondary level.

Since children are our future, our Government runs a food-for-education/cash-for-education programme providing food rations to poor primary school children in rural areas. Our aim is to achieve full literacy by 2014.

Health is another major sector where our Government is striving to make progress. During our last period in power, we formulated a national health policy whose main thrust was to ensure basic health care for all without discrimination. A national strategy for maternal health has also been adopted, which provides quality services for safe motherhood. Regarding infant mortality, our plan is to reduce the infant mortality rate from 54 per thousand live births to 15 per thousand. Our plan is also to extend child immunization programmes to reach 100 per cent of the population during our present term.

During our last period in power, we initiated programmes to establish one community health-care centre for every 6,000 people, in order to bring primary health-care services to people's homes. Only 4,000 of the first phase of 18,000 could be completed during the period we were in power prior to the changeover of government, and the programme was terminated. We are now reactivating the programme.

Bangladesh is often cited for its social safety programmes. A wide range of safety nets have been put in place, such as cash and food transfer programmes, micro-credit and other special poverty alleviation programmes, and special programmes for minorities, the marginalized, the disabled, the physically challenged and the underprivileged. In our earlier period in power, I had introduced an old age pension, a pension for distressed women, Shanti Nibash or old people's homes, a Karmasangsthan Bank to provide earnings to unemployed youth through productive job creation, and Ashrayan or homes on Government-owned land for homeless people, as well as sustainable jobs.

An innovative programme instituted by my current Government seeks to provide employment to at least one member of each family. Currently, over a half of our budgetary resources are allocated to reducing the poverty level from 45 per cent to 15 per cent by 2021.

Food security has always been our Government's prime concern. During our earlier term in power, my Government's agricultural programmes made Bangladesh self-sufficient in food, for which the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization presented us with its prestigious Ceres Award. After the change in government, Bangladesh returned to being in food deficit. This time around, our Government has adopted a national food policy to ensure sustained food security for all, enhance people's access to food, particularly for children, women and the elderly, reduce food prices, increase food production by reducing the price of fuel, fertilizer and irrigation, and ensure supply of farm inputs.

On the international level, at the World Summit on Food Security to be held in Rome in November 2009, Bangladesh will be seeking a global agreement for the development of agriculture and the attainment of food self-sufficiency in developing countries, particularly the least developed countries (LDCs). Substantial financial contributions from developed countries, an agreement on sustainable agricultural policies, the transfer of technology, equitable and fair trade rules for food and agricultural products with special preferential treatment for LDCs, and the removal of agricultural subsidies in the developed world will also be sought, in order to address the challenges we face in ensuring the food security critical for advancing our development agenda.

For some time now, climate change has been adversely impacting our low-lying, deltaic, monsoonal country. Although Bangladesh's own contribution to climate change is negligible, it is one of its worst victims. Erratic floods, cyclones, droughts and earthquakes have been disrupting our agriculture and challenging our water resources, as well as our health, energy and urban planning. In particular, cyclones battering the coastal areas have taken countless lives, and sudden floods have uprooted families by the thousands and continue to do so every year. River bank

erosion, landslides, soil degradation and deforestation are causing millions of climate-change refugees. They already greatly affect our densely populated cities. It is alarming that a metre's rise in the sea level would inundate 18 per cent of our land mass, directly impacting 11 per cent of our people. Scientific estimates indicate that, of the 1 billion people expected to be displaced worldwide by 2050 as a result of climate-change factors, one in every 45 people in the world and one in every seven in Bangladesh, would be a victim.

Bangladesh has therefore decided to take some measures immediately. Dredging all major rivers is at the top of the agenda for adaptation to climate change. Capital dredging projects will keep rivers in their natural course, deepen them to hold more water, restrict flooding, reduce flood damage, reclaim inundated arable land and keep them navigable. Maintenance dredging would then ensure the sustained regulated flow of the rivers. With the rise in sea level, the excavated silt could build, raise and fortify embankments, increase green belts and help create elevated flat ground for the homes of the displaced, thereby discouraging them from moving to cities. Meanwhile, 14,000 cyclone shelters have been constructed, and more are on the way.

Those activities would obviously entail huge costs. A climate-change trust fund has been established with our own resources, but in order to implement the projects the assistance of the international community is imperative.

Rapid and unplanned urbanization, occupational dislocation and lack of food, water and land security are some of the consequences of climate change. The affected communities would not only lose their homes. They would also stand to lose their identity, nationality and their very existence and, in some cases, their countries. In December this year, we will meet in Copenhagen for the fifteenth session of the Conference of the Parties and, therefore, it is critical that the outcome of the Conference reflect a commitment to assured, adequate and easily accessible funding for adaptation and to affordable, eco-friendly technology transfer to developing countries, particularly to the LDCs, as well as specific commitments to deeper cuts in greenhouse emissions. Bangladesh would, of course, make a strong call at the Conference to consider a new legal regime to protect climate migrants under the Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change that ensures the social, cultural and economic rehabilitation of migrants displaced through climate change.

On the vital issue of climate change, the recent bold and courageous proposal of Prime Minister Gordon Brown of the United Kingdom has caught the imagination of States at the forefront of dealing with climate change. Among his proposals, the proposed fund to support the adaptation and mitigation programmes of countries affected by climate change has, in particular, won our support. It could be the beginning of a systematic flow of funds towards improving the adversely changing environmental conditions around the globe. The Copenhagen Conference should seriously consider his proposal. The Conference must also be aware that climate-change mitigation does not restrict the steps taken to alleviate energy poverty, and that the post-2012 agreement should incorporate predictable and legally binding commitments to address the adaptation needs of low-lying coastal States, small island countries and LDCs.

The world is caught in an economic recession, the likes of which has not been seen since the Great Depression of the 1930s. The economically vulnerable countries, such as the LDCs, which are not responsible for the crisis, have become its worst victims. Bangladesh is faced with a sharp reduction in exports, falling prices for primary commodities, declining remittances and a severe credit crunch, leading to the contraction of our economic growth, rising unemployment and poverty.

The crisis is due to years of neglect of equity and justice, including a fundamentally unfair international financial structure that never changed with the needs of the times. The need of the hour is the immediate restructuring of the global financial and economic system. The Bretton Woods institutions, namely, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, must accommodate a stronger presence of developing countries, especially the LDCs. Indeed, a voting weight proportionate to share capital has proved unsuited to the Bretton Woods system.

Surely, fiscal stimulus packages would help support global demand and aid recovery. However, liberal trade concessions by developed countries, such as duty- and quota-free market access and trade capacity-building for developing countries, particularly LDCs, would rescue them from dire straits. The early

conclusion of the Doha Development Round of the World Trade Organization trade negotiations would be an important collective stimulus package for our economies.

It is also the time for the countries of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development to fulfil their official development assistance commitments to contribute 0.7 per cent of their gross national income to developing countries and 0.2 per cent specifically to the least developed countries by 2010, as reaffirmed in the Brussels Programme of Action.

The economic turmoil has adversely affected employment at the national level and worldwide. The worst affected are the LDCs, both domestically and in terms of employment abroad. Remittances constitute a significant part of their gross domestic income. However, recent restrictions on new admissions of migrant workers and, even worse, their repatriation to their home countries have resulted in socio-economic instability in many countries. Therefore, recovery measures should be designed in such a manner so as not to adversely affect employment opportunities of immigrant workers from developing countries.

Bangladesh is proud of its outstanding role as a major troop-contributing country serving the United Nations in maintaining peace and security worldwide. Since 1988, Bangladesh has been involved in 32 United Nations peacekeeping operations in 24 different countries, contributing approximately 83,000 personnel. Today, Bangladesh is ranked second with 9,567 peacekeepers serving in various United Nations missions.

With pride I say that, throughout the years, 84 of our valiant peacekeepers have laid down their lives for the cause of peace under the auspices of the United Nations. Sadly, despite our contributions and sacrifices, Bangladesh does not have proportionate representation in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, nor does it have a say in the planning and strategy design of peacekeeping missions. Indeed, this situation calls for rectification on the basis of proportional representation in all fairness.

As a peaceful nation involved in United Nations peacekeeping efforts, Bangladesh is naturally opposed to terrorism. Bangladesh is a party to all terrorism-related United Nations Conventions, which is a testament to our commitment to fighting that scourge. We categorically reject the claims of those who cloak themselves in the rhetoric of Islam or any other faith to justify violence. Nationwide, we have taken stern measures against militant groups and their leaders. We are firmly opposed to violence and terrorism; instead, we promote peace across the world. Bangladesh, in sessions of the General Assembly, has spearheaded the flagship resolution on the culture of peace. At last year's session of the General Assembly, the resolution was sponsored by 124 nations.

The International Mother Language Day was adopted by UNESCO, at the initiative of Bangladesh, in recognition of 21 February '952, when language martyrs died for their mother tongue Bangla. Now every year on that day UNESCO celebrates all languages of the world. The Bangla language is spoken by over 250 million people worldwide, primarily in Bangladesh and the Indian state of West Bengal. The Bangladesh Parliament therefore recently adopted a resolution requesting the United Nations to declare Bangla as one of its official languages. Given the rich heritage of the Bangla language and its singular place as a symbol of people's faith in the power of languages to sustain cultures and indeed the identity of nations, I seek the support of the membership of the United Nations General Assembly for its acceptance as an official language of the United Nations.

At present we are witnessing a rapidly changing world as a result of climate change, economic turmoil and terrorism. It is crystal clear to those who wish to open their eyes that we all belong to a global village where we must live and work together. I therefore call upon all States to discard short-sighted discords and adopt a common resolve in facing today's grim challenges. Let us share each other's responsibilities, burdens and prosperity. After all, at stake is our common and shared future. In reaching out to one another, we will leave a harmonious world for our children and future generations thereafter.

May Bangladesh live forever! Long live the United Nations!

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Prime Minister of the People's Republic of Bangladesh for the statement she has just made.

The Honourable Sheikh Hasina, Prime Minister of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by The Honourable Denzil Douglas, Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs, Minister of National Security and Immigration, Minister of Sustainable Development and Minister of Tourism, Sports and Culture of Saint Kitts and Nevis

The Acting President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs, Minister of National Security and Immigration, Minister of Sustainable Development and Minister of Tourism, Sports and Culture of Saint Kitts and Nevis.

The Honourable Denzil Douglas, Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs, Minister of National Security and Immigration, Minister of Sustainable Development and Minister of Tourism, Sports and Culture of Saint Kitts and Nevis, was escorted to the rostrum.

The Acting President: I have great pleasure in welcoming His Excellency Mr. Denzil Douglas, Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs, Minister of National Security and Immigration, Minister of Sustainable Development and Minister of Tourism, Sports and Culture of Saint Kitts and Nevis, and inviting him to address the General Assembly.

Mr. Douglas (Saint Kitts and Nevis): It is indeed an honour to address the General Assembly at its sixty-fourth session. Today, we converge in this Hall to outline how, from the perspective of our respective nations, this esteemed body might uphold the rights of all mankind, secure world peace and indeed, ensure the very survival of planet Earth.

We converge here in order to arrive at some collective insight regarding the interests of the world's various peoples as well as the interests of humankind itself. We have come here not only to be heard, but more importantly to listen and ultimately to commit ourselves, both as a body and as independent, sovereign States, to constructive, ameliorative action.

I congratulate the President on his election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its sixty-fourth session and assure him of my Government's full support; and if I may, through him thank his predecessor, His Excellency Father Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann of Nicaragua for his leadership during his presidency of the sixty-third session.

Our world is defined by issues of politics, the environment, trade and finance at the global level. Last year's financial crisis, which continues to reverberate throughout the world, stands as a sobering reminder of the interconnectedness of our economies and the knowledge that multilateralism is indispensable. Whether we are speaking about global trade, monetary and fiscal policies, human rights protection, health and public security or protecting the environment, these issues have become interlinked. And their complexity means that no country can act alone.

The circumstances that precipitated the virtual collapse of several financial institutions were not created by small States such as St. Kitts and Nevis. Yet, as in the case of climate change, their consequences have been forced upon us and we are left to fend for ourselves. But, if we are to learn anything from the crises we face today, it should be that collective action and partnership are necessary not only in the management of conflicts but also in building effective, comprehensive and sustainable infrastructure to protect our citizens' future. The ever-changing global landscape will require that Governments and institutions work to establish common regimes and international regulatory frameworks for some time to come.

To that end, my Government will support an enhanced role for political forums such as the United Nations to strengthen multilateralism. We owe this much to the citizens around the world, who still look to the United Nations for hope — rooted in the belief that through our efforts their aspirations will be realized.

We live in complex times, and unexpected developments challenge our resolve daily. But we cannot and must not relent. We must double our efforts and use the convening power and political authority of this Organization and others like it to find common ground, even in the face of strident and sometimes divergent views. That is how we build that indispensable architecture so as to create a legacy worthy of future generations. And that is no small feat; it is, in fact, a monumental task. But the Government of St. Kitts and Nevis is confident that the President's central role in the coming year will help us to craft a template for collective action.

I would like this General Assembly to be able to see the world from the perspective of a small middle-income heavily indebted country. The country that I

have the honour of leading is a small one — the smallest nation in the Western hemisphere. Despite the recent downturn, small economies like ours continue to display resilience and to make the sacrifices necessary to sustain ourselves.

As far as our access to capital is concerned, our hard work and sound management have had unexpected, harsh and destabilizing implications, with unwelcome restrictions vis-à-vis debt relief and other key matters. The international economic crisis has made clear the urgent need for the restructuring and repair of the global economic system. As this moves forward, I urge that the very real vulnerabilities of small States that happen to have high per capita gross domestic product be more clearly considered and reflected in multilateral policies, deliberations and procedures.

We seek support for a new debt forgiveness initiative within the framework of the reform of the international financial institutions and through the materialization of a concept of middle-income highly indebted countries, in which peculiarities and vulnerabilities no longer trigger punitive actions such as premature graduation from concessionary financing.

In addition, the global economic crisis, which began far beyond our shores, has nonetheless made its way to us and made it necessary for my country to develop and introduce its own stimulus package, thus forcing us to sacrifice urgently needed tax revenues in the interest of protecting employment and to find the means to shore up and advance the viability of our own private sector.

Nevertheless, we are continuing to invest in our people through education and retraining programmes and by working to attract international investments in critical sectors to generate employment and other business opportunities. By doing this, we hope to prepare for the future, when the global economy eventually rebounds.

It is no secret that our efforts can sometimes amount to very little, because, through no fault of our own, it is a fact that when global crises occur, small vulnerable economies tend to pay a disproportionately high price. But under my leadership, Saint Kitts and Nevis will not play victim or assign blame. We prefer instead to work vigorously at the national level and to collaborate actively internationally so as to introduce measures and systems that transform our economy and improve the lives of our citizens.

Going forward, we want our voices and ideas to inform whatever new architecture is developed, so as to avoid the mistakes of the past. Therefore, we will support the measures established to follow up on issues pertaining to recovery from the global financial and economic crises. And we intend to participate enthusiastically in the process to ensure that the recovery is comprehensive.

We have common challenges and a shared responsibility to tackle them. We in the Caribbean have repeatedly called on the international community to recognize the special circumstances attending the realities of small island developing States, not as a favour to us, but as a practical way of addressing the multifaceted and complex issues that we face. For instance, on the issue of environmental protection, the Government of Saint Kitts and Nevis has always urged a multilateral approach.

The interconnectedness of our planet, then, is indeed real, and nowhere is it more so than on the issue of climate change. Whereas small countries such as Saint Kitts and Nevis have tiny carbon footprints with negative environmental impact, global warming and climate change, with their effects, do not discriminate. We can all agree that the incidence of catastrophic climatic events, such as hurricanes, floods and mudslides, continue to cause more destruction and claim more and more lives each year.

The geography of our small islands is changing. Sea levels are rising, and the marine life on which many of our citizens depend for their livelihoods is fast diminishing. Our coastlines are being affected. Our reefs are paying a high price. The long-term implications for food production are dire indeed. Again, though those changes began far beyond our shores, climate change has been inflicting a massive and disproportionate blow on nations such as mine, causing us now to urge, in the strongest possible terms, timely and effective action. Saint Kitts and Nevis is not interested in stale debates about blame; we are interested in action, and we want to play our own part.

In the interest of advancing global stability, therefore, we urge unrelenting commitment to emission targets by industrialized nations. We urge that the major global emitters take the lead in ensuring that the resources are in place so that small island developing

States can meet our adaptation, mitigation, technology transfer and capacity-building goals. And we urge that the emitters embrace the measures needed to compensate for the risks and the losses resulting from climate change.

We continue to collaborate regionally and to work towards efforts in the areas of disaster preparedness, reduction and mitigation. We recognize that high dependence on fossil fuels is untenable. Therefore, with support from the Organization of American States and private enterprise, we are exploring renewable sources of energy, including geothermal energy, in the Federation of Saint Kitts and Nevis.

As the expiration of the Kyoto Protocol approaches, my Government welcomes the recent commitments by some industrialized countries to do more to address harmful emissions. I hope that that will be translated into concrete results on the environment and climate change at the Copenhagen summit later this year.

I also wish to urge the United Nations to strengthen the Small Island Developing States Unit with additional resources to make it more effective in addressing the concerns of Member States. I look forward to the Unit's assistance as we work towards the five-year review of the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States at the current sixty-fourth session. I urge Member States to ensure that the agreed goals of the Mauritius Strategy and the commitments made are implemented and to support initiatives proposed during the review exercise.

In multilateralism, constructive partnership is an effective strategy. In such an approach, we are forced to appreciate the value of belonging: the need for all peoples of the world to be embraced within the fraternity of nations and to be allowed to contribute to the common good. The Republic of China on Taiwan, a constructive partner to a range of countries around the world for so long, has a great deal to contribute to specialized agencies and programmes of the United Nations, such as the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the International Civil Aviation Organization, given that climate change and aviation safety affect its own development, as well as the well-being of all mankind.

The issue of security continues to be prominent on the international agenda, and the global anti-crime campaign intensifies, as concern heightens in the face of emerging threats to our citizens and to society. This development is the result of a new wave of crime and violence, especially among the youth population. In the hemisphere, there is increased focus on human security in relation to the transnational nature of the categories of crime — especially illicit trafficking in drugs and firearms — that are linked to anti-social behaviour, particularly among our youth.

An emerging trend in the global analysis of crime points to a new variable: young people as victims of crime. Studies show that, in increasing numbers, the victims and perpetrators of crime are young men. The reality of coexisting in a global village, the prevalence and sophistication of modern technology, the enhanced communication infrastructure and the free movement of capital and people have given rise to an unprecedented escalation in crime and violence.

Youth alienation, youth rage and youth brutality are troubling global phenomena in urgent need of global analysis and action. And so, this moment demands that this body, with its unique capacities and capabilities and as part of its quest for international societal stability, marshal all available resources to better identify the underlying causative factors and come to a clear agreement as to how, individually and collectively, we can halt and reverse this destabilizing trajectory.

Violence is a multisectoral public-policy challenge. It spans several areas, including public security, governance, development and public health. The human, social and financial costs of violence are unacceptably high. In addition to physical injury and death, violence has a serious and lifelong impact on mental and physical health, including non-communicable diseases and HIV/AIDS, and damages the social fabric, leading to unsafe communities. Ultimately, violence slows economic and social development in those countries that can least afford it. However, scientific evidence amassed in recent years clearly demonstrates that violence and its consequences can be successfully prevented. But, at present, an integrated approach to violence prevention is lacking.

An attempt to define a regional response to the problem was made at a recent two-day regional

symposium, held on 22 and 23 June 2009 in Saint Kitts and Nevis, on the theme "Confronting the challenges of youth crime and violence: Defining a multisectoral response". We would like to call upon Member States to join us today in submitting a draft resolution in support of an integrated approach and multisectoral response to violence prevention, which we would wish to place on the agenda of the sixty-fifth session of the General Assembly.

My Government strongly condemns all forms of violence, including transnational organized crime and terrorism. And while we commend the United Nations for its continued assistance to Member States in our crime-fighting efforts, we urge that it extend its support by reopening, in the spirit of developing an effective multilateral approach, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime regional office in the Caribbean.

The challenges we must meet are vast. The non-proliferation of nuclear weapons today and a world free of nuclear weapons tomorrow should be the goals of us all.

Within the Pan-Caribbean Partnership, we continue to develop and expand regional responses to the HIV/AIDS epidemic. The problems posed by the HIV/AIDS pandemic are a real and growing threat, not only in terms of loss of life and livelihood, but also to the extent that the disease eliminates the most productive groups in our society and demands outlays of capital that would otherwise be allocated to economic and social development. The Caribbean Community, through the Pan-Caribbean Partnership, has made gains in tackling the medical aspects of the disease.

The President returned to the Chair.

But we need to do much more to fight stigma and discrimination and to increase access to inexpensive antiretroviral drugs and treatment for those infected with the disease. With the help of the international community, we can reconcile the objective need of pharmaceutical companies to receive proper compensation for their research, development and investment without prejudice to those who are in urgent need of care and without politicizing the issue.

We, too, are very concerned about the challenges that non-communicable chronic diseases pose to small countries like ours and to mankind in general. In this regard, we join with the Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago in calling on the United Nations to convene at the earliest opportunity a special summit on non-communicable chronic disease.

In conclusion, Mr. President, my Government applauds your initiative to pursue effective responses to global crises and strengthen multilateralism. For Saint Kitts and Nevis, multilateralism is a sine qua non and the only effective approach to lasting peace, effective security and sustainable development. We have seen the fallout from unilateral action. Many of us have paid the price for the decisions and actions made in isolation by a few.

I emphasize that it is the fundamental right of all humankind to choose its own destiny. At the same time, we have a collective duty to act responsibly and to work in the interest of the common good. That is the premise of multilateralism. That is the promise of my Government, and, Mr. President, my delegation stands prepared and willing to support you in this cause.

I recall that it was Hubert H. Humphrey, former Vice-President of the United States of America, who felt it necessary to emphasize to individuals, like those of us in this Hall today, our responsibility to ensure that the United Nations is a force for verifiable, constructive change in the world. In reminding us and those who will come after us of what is expected of us, he said:

> "The heroes of the world community are not those who withdraw when difficulties ensue, not those who can envision neither the prospect of success nor the consequence of failure — but those who stand the heat of battle, the fight for world peace through the United Nations."

This we must do today and forever.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs, Minister of National Security and Immigration, Minister of Sustainable Development and Minister of Tourism, Sports and Culture of Saint Kitts and Nevis for the statement he has just made.

The Honourable Denzil Douglas, Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs, Minister of National Security and Immigration, Minister of Sustainable Development and Minister of Tourism, Sports and Culture of Saint Kitts and Nevis, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by The Right Honourable Pakalitha Bethuel Mosisili, Prime Minister and Minister for Defence and Public Service of the Kingdom of Lesotho

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the Prime Minister and Minister for Defence and Public Service of the Kingdom of Lesotho.

The Right Honourable Pakalitha Bethuel Mosisili, Prime Minister and Minister for Defence and Public Service of the Kingdom of Lesotho, was escorted to the rostrum.

The President: I have great pleasure in welcoming His Excellency Mr. Pakalitha Bethuel Mosisili, Prime Minister and Minister for Defence and Public Service of the Kingdom of Lesotho, and inviting him to address the General Assembly.

Mr. Mosisili (Lesotho): Mr. President, the theme that you have chosen for this session of the General Assembly — "Effective responses to global crises: strengthening multilateralism and dialogue among civilizations for international peace, security and development" — is both timely and relevant.

We meet against the backdrop of some of the most serious challenges mankind has confronted in a long time. The financial and economic crisis, climate change and issues of international peace and security are but some of these challenges. No other organization is better placed than the United Nations to find solutions to them.

In June, your predecessor, Mr. President, convened a high-level Conference on the World Financial and Economic Crisis. We all had the opportunity then to identify and agree on the causes and effects of and solutions to this crisis. I shall not revisit the deliberations of that Conference. Suffice it to say that it seems obvious that Governments can no longer abdicate their responsibility of oversight and regulation of the global financial systems to financial institutions.

The least developed and developing countries have been the hardest hit by the financial crisis. Their exports have been severely reduced and their capital flows choked. The impact of the crisis is felt in all aspects of life, be it in the increase in unemployment, illiteracy or the incidence of HIV- and AIDS-related deaths due to the unavailability or unaffordability of drugs.

Lesotho, as a small economy, is highly vulnerable to external shocks and is therefore one of those adversely affected by the financial crisis. Demand for textile exports has dropped dramatically, resulting in unprecedented loss of livelihoods and erosion of the gains we had made in eradicating poverty.

However, all is not lost. I note in this regard the efforts of the Group of Eight, which has pledged a stimulus package of $1.1 trillion, the major part of which will be made available to developing countries. My concern is that this initiative seems to have stalled and it is unclear how the funds will be distributed. It will be fair only if the disbursement is informed by the needs of individual countries, and I hasten to add that the disbursement should be free of quotas and conditions. While I remain optimistic that the pledge will see the light of day, I appeal for the fulfilment of commitments that have been made regarding overseas development aid. I further appeal for the requisite political will to complete the Doha Round of negotiations as a matter of urgency. These negotiations are the anchor of our hope for the dawn of a fair and equitable international trade regime.

I congratulate the Secretary-General on convening the just-ended Summit on Climate Change, at which we were unanimous in our belief that the challenges posed by climate change are beyond the capacity of any individual country to deal with alone. Response to the impact of climate change must be a top priority for the whole of mankind, for at stake here is the preservation of the very elements responsible for the sustenance of human life on our planet.

Lesotho is hopeful that the Copenhagen Conference will usher in a new global agreement that will result in the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. We must never forget that at the forefront of those most affected by the impact of climate change are the poor and the innocent. Our call for the industrialized nations to help improve developing countries' capacity for mitigation and adaptation is therefore not misplaced. Those who are responsible for causing pollution of the environment have the responsibility to make cuts in harmful emissions and to help those adversely affected. We acknowledge that climate change may not be our collective fault, but it is surely our collective responsibility.

Another challenge confronting us is that of international peace and security. This challenge is a matter of utmost interest to my delegation, for it reminds Governments of their obligation to protect their peoples from mass atrocities, including genocide, ethnic cleansing, war crimes and crimes against humanity. I am referring here to the principle of the responsibility to protect.

The Rwanda genocide is still fresh in our minds. Though the wounds may have healed, the scars remain pronounced and serve as a painful reminder of man's inhumanity to man. They also serve as a sad reminder of how the international community can fail a people. Beyond Rwanda, and I dare say even post-Rwanda, we have witnessed mass atrocities committed with impunity against the most innocent and vulnerable populations. And sadly, the Security Council, in whose purview the power to act is centralized, has failed to act, thereby incapacitating the international community's ability to act also.

In our resolve never to fail any population again, we adopted the principle of the responsibility to protect at our 2005 World Summit. This principle seeks to restore the confidence of populations in the United Nations system. In July, the General Assembly held a debate on the Secretary-General's report on implementing the responsibility to protect (A/63/677). Lesotho welcomes that balanced report, especially the proposed practical measures for its implementation. We view the report as a good basis for negotiations in the General Assembly on how to implement the principle. It is true that the scope of the principle is narrow and limited to genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. I would nonetheless discourage any reopening of the debates on paragraphs 138 and 139 of the World Summit Outcome Document (resolution 60/1).

I find a linkage between this principle and other critical issues that continue to feature on our international agenda. Among these are reform of the United Nations, especially the Security Council, disarmament and the International Criminal Court. Needless to say, the principle of the responsibility to protect is meaningful only if it is grounded in multilateralism and collective action by the international community. The forums through which the responsibility to protect may be achievable is the Security Council and, beyond that, the General Assembly. Unfortunately, the Council, as presently composed, is not capable of exercising effective leadership in this area.

The Security Council reflects the situation that obtained 64 years ago. It is not a true reflection of the current membership of the United Nations. Its composition is therefore irrelevant and undemocratic. For all intents and purposes, the Council lacks legitimacy. For as long as it remains undemocratic, it will continue to fail the vulnerable and defenceless. It will continue to use double standards and remain a tool of the foreign policies of certain States. The desired multilateral path will continue to give way to the unilateral one. It is imperative, therefore, to hasten the United Nations reform process. The intergovernmental negotiations that were held during the sixty-third session of the General Assembly have advanced the reform process a step or two. However, more still needs to be done and rather urgently.

The United Nations was formed on the ashes of the two World Wars. Its main purpose was and still is to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold misery to mankind. But the continuing possession and development of nuclear weapons cast doubt on whether this objective can indeed be realized. At a time when the world is hungering for nuclear disarmament, why should some countries be testing, modernizing and producing new generations of nuclear weapons?

It is our obligation as the international community to strive for a world free of nuclear weapons. We remain disappointed in those countries that are engaged in the testing of nuclear weapons. We must, however, reiterate the right of every country to the development and use of nuclear technology for peaceful purposes. The peaceful use of nuclear technology can be beneficial to all mankind.

We are delighted that the third session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons has adopted the agenda for the 2010 Review Conference. This historic achievement strengthens our optimism that our commitment to the disarmament process will gain renewed momentum and enthusiasm.

In 1998, the Statute establishing the International Criminal Court was adopted in Rome. The Court is, inter alia, an answer to war crimes and crimes against humanity. It safeguards the rule of law in the

international arena and is therefore well placed to complement the implementation of the principle of the responsibility to protect. Consequently, we should, as the international community, unconditionally extend our support to the Court. We must preserve its integrity and independence. There should be no State or organ of the United Nations that interferes with the Court's processes. Most importantly, the Court must uphold the highest standards of impartiality, integrity and fairness. Lesotho supports the principle of universal jurisdiction. However, we reject selective application of that noble principle because it erodes its acceptability and credibility.

During the past year, we witnessed a resurgence of piracy off the coast of Somalia. This development has had a negative impact on maritime security and safety. There is a need for the international community to adopt a comprehensive approach to tackling the phenomenon of piracy off the coast of Somalia and beyond. In this regard, Lesotho joins the voices of the heads of State and Government of the African Union in calling for the convening of an international conference to discuss the adoption of an international convention on the phenomenon of maritime piracy and to eradicate its underlying causes.

I would be remiss not to refer to the plight of the peoples of the State of Palestine, the Saharan Arab Democratic Republic and the Republic of Cuba. These are peoples who continue to experience untold suffering, ranging from war to political, economic and social injustices. We call on Israel to cease all settlement activities, including the so-called natural growth in the West Bank and East Jerusalem. By the same token, we call on both sides to cease all acts of hostility and attacks. In particular, Palestine must halt the indiscriminate launching of rockets on Israeli civilians, while Israel must desist from the use of disproportionate force against Palestinian civilians.

We welcome the intensified efforts of the Quartet, the Arab League and other members involved in brokering peace in the Middle East. We are mindful of the fact that the quest for peace in the Middle East should be the responsibility of all of us. We express our solidarity with the people of Palestine. At the same time, we reiterate the inviolability and, indeed, the right to exist of the State of Israel.

The struggle of the Saharan people is a struggle for self-determination based on the principles of decolonization and sovereignty of nations. Both the General Assembly and the Security Council have recognized the inalienable rights of the Saharan people to self-determination and independence. We urge the Saharan Arab Democratic Republic and the Kingdom of Morocco to continue with their negotiations on an equal footing and without any conditions. The aspirations of the Saharan people to self-determination must take paramount priority in these negotiations.

We also hope that the positive signals of engagement between the Republic of Cuba and the United States of America will bring an end to the unfortunate financial and economic embargo imposed on the Republic of Cuba. Lesotho shall continue to support the call for the lifting of the economic embargo against the people of Cuba as a matter of principle and of urgency.

I wish to conclude by saying that no obstacle can beat the might of the United Nations. We must continue to pursue and indeed to cherish the purposes that have brought us together. The responsibility to secure the future of mankind relies heavily on our ability to use a collective approach to resolving the challenges of the world. We cannot ignore our responsibility to build a better and more united world, for the future generations.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Prime Minister and Minister for Defence and Public Service of the Kingdom of Lesotho for the statement he has just made.

The Right Honourable Pakalitha Bethuel Mosisili, Prime Minister and Minister for Defence and Public Service of the Kingdom of Lesotho, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by The Right Honourable Madhav Kumar Nepal, Prime Minister of the Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the Prime Minister of the Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal.

The Right Honourable Madhav Kumar Nepal, Prime Minister of the Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal, was escorted to the rostrum.

The President: I have great pleasure in welcoming His Excellency Mr. Madhav Kumar Nepal,

Prime Minister of the Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal, and inviting him to address the General Assembly.

Mr. Nepal (Nepal): I would like to begin by extending my warm congratulations to you, Sir, on your election to the presidency of the Assembly at its current session. As an incumbent Vice-President, I assure you of my delegation's full cooperation in the discharge of your responsibilities. I also take this opportunity to place on record our appreciation for Mr. Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann, the outgoing President, for his exemplary leadership during the sixty-third session.

I thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report on the work of the Organization (A/64/1). We appreciate his efficient stewardship on various issues of critical global significance and on the reform of the United Nations. He also deserves our thanks for supporting the nationally driven peace process of Nepal.

I bring greetings and good wishes from the people and Government of Nepal, a country that expresses unswerving commitment to the ideals of the United Nations. We look to the Organization as a true advocate and upholder of the universal values of peace, justice, equality, freedom and human dignity. As was so aptly recognized in the Millennium Declaration (resolution 55/2), the United Nations is indeed the indispensable common house of the entire human family. A more efficient and stronger United Nations is obviously in the interest of us all.

Sovereign equality, territorial integrity, political independence, non-interference and the peaceful settlement of international disputes have become the bedrock of inter-State relations. These principles, enshrined in the United Nations Charter more than six decades ago, represent the highest ideals of contemporary international relations. They have stood the test of time and proved to be timeless and universal. They provide the basis for the smooth and harmonious conduct of international relations among States that are sovereign, independent and interconnected. As we march towards increasing interdependence through globalization, these well-established principles and norms of inter-State relations assume even greater relevance for us.

History stands testimony to the fact that human civilization has no linear progression. We live in changing times. Today, the nature, speed and scope of such changes are astounding. New opportunities and unforeseen challenges always await us along our way to peace, progress and prosperity. We often find ourselves at the crossroads of stability and peace, on the one hand, and conflict and domination, on the other. It is only with principled stands and determination that we have moved towards peace and development throughout history. Whenever we have digressed from these principles, perils and catastrophes have visited us. International solidarity and a true spirit of global partnership are therefore indispensable, and multilateralism offers the best means and opportunity to address the global problems of our times.

Nepal is currently in the midst of a great political transition. With the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Accord in November 2006, our decade-long armed conflict ended and a nationally driven peace process is now in progress. The Constituent Assembly, consisting of 601 members elected through a mixed-proportional system, has been writing a new, democratic and republican constitution. It is one of the most inclusive and representative elected bodies in the history of Nepal. Almost one third of the Constituent Assembly members are women, and a fair number represent the country's various ethnic minorities. Thematic committees on various aspects of the new constitution have been preparing their respective reports following a process of broad consultations with the Nepali people. We are determined to take the peace process to a positive and meaningful conclusion, as envisaged in the Comprehensive Peace Accord, by building consensus among the political parties through dialogue and consultations.

We are a multi-ethnic, multilingual and multireligious country. As we have opted for a Federal Democratic Republic, we are now restructuring the State by organizing it into federal units, as desired by the people of Nepal. We believe democracy is more meaningful when it is closer to the people. We believe that reconfiguring the State into federal units is one such significant step towards deepening the roots of democracy in our country.

My Government has four major tasks at hand: taking the peace process to its positive and meaningful conclusion, writing a new democratic constitution through the Constituent Assembly within the stipulated time frame, speeding up the country's economic development to lift it up from poverty, and meeting the

rising expectations of our people in a new democratic environment. We have been doing our best to accomplish these tasks through dialogue, consultations and consensus among the country's major political parties.

Looking at the overall progress we have made over the past three years, there is reason to be forward-looking and optimistic about Nepal's peace process. We have come a long way in terms of our transition from the decade-long violent conflict. As in every post-conflict situation, there have been ups and downs along the way. Managing the legacy of the violent past with justice and reconciliation and mainstreaming all the forces involved into a democratic order are the major challenges before us.

We are for democratic order, peace and stability. There is no place either for extremism or for permanent instability in Nepal. The Government is doing its best to ensure moderation in order to institutionalize democratic rules and ideals and to leave conflict permanently behind. I am sure that there is a common understanding on this issue within the country and among our friends in the international community. The desire to avoid a relapse into conflict and to fulfil the hopes and aspirations of the people has constantly prodded us to move forward with dialogue, consensus and unity of purpose. We know that we still have far to go, and we are determined to reach our destination — a peaceful, prosperous and stable Nepal.

In achieving that, we know we must be alert to the desire of our people for both freedom and development. Freedom rings hollow when there is no development. Development loses its soul if it is not accompanied by freedom. These are our twin goals, and my Government is committed to pursuing them with clear vision and commitment.

I am confident that we will have the continuous support and cooperation of the international community in achieving these goals. Needless to say, any failure to address the rising expectations of our people and to provide peace dividends to those affected by the conflict at the grass-roots level, may have unintended consequences that challenge the peace and democratization processes in Nepal and elsewhere. Therefore, to promote the positive conclusion of the peace process and to institutionalize our hard-won democracy, the Nepali people deserve support for rehabilitation, compensation and reconstruction arising from the damage that occurred during the conflict. I request special support from development partners in addressing our post-conflict development challenges.

We are fully committed to the protection and promotion of human rights. Since the end of the decade-long armed conflict and the beginning of the peace process in 2006, the human rights situation in the country has improved significantly. The Government is determined to establish a truth and reconciliation commission and a disappearance commission as part of ensuring transitional justice and restoring social harmony and peace. We already have our National Human Rights Commission, which is a constitutional body with full autonomy in its area of work.

We appreciate the continued support of the United Nations to Nepal's ongoing peace process through the United Nations Mission in Nepal. We are determined to bring the peace process to a positive and meaningful conclusion as early as possible. As we ourselves are now undergoing a post-conflict situation, we understand the importance of peacebuilding in post-conflict societies. Nepal is pleased to contribute to the work of the Peacebuilding Commission as a new member of its Organizational Committee starting this year. We understand that a review of the activities of the Commission is slated for 2010. That would provide an opportunity to assess its activities and also to explore ways to make peacebuilding a more effective and innovative mechanism.

Whether it concerns issues of peace, conflict, terrorism, climate change, the financial crisis, food security, development challenges or other vulnerabilities, we are so interconnected that no country can escape their impacts. The global village has become a palpable reality before us. Global problems thus require global solutions. In that context, I welcome the selection of the theme "Effective responses to global crises: strengthening multilateralism and dialogue among civilizations for international peace, security and development" for this year's general debate.

The economic and financial crisis that swept the world within a relatively short span of time is the most recent reminder of the vulnerability inherent in the process of globalization and its global implications. If we look around, we will see that climate change is another issue staring at us. Regional conflicts are yet another global issue of concern to us all.

The least developed countries (LDCs) and landlocked developing countries, among others, are the most vulnerable with regard to all those issues. Their special needs call for more specific and an enhanced level of international support in terms of their concerns and challenges. At the same time, the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on the World Financial and Economic Crisis and its Impact on Development (resolution 63/303, annex), held here in New York in June this year, should be implemented in all earnestness. We also stress the early implementation of the outcome document of the International Conference on Financing for Development (resolution 63/239, annex), held in Doha last year.

While the global financial and economic crisis wreaked havoc on the already fragile economic health of the least developed countries, that unanticipated shock has also brought into sharper relief the urgent need for an enhanced level of understanding, resources and a policy space for the developing countries to mitigate its impact and to avoid its recurrence.

The global crises have posed a serious challenge to the fight against poverty in the LDCs. The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) can still be achieved if all of us in the international community act together, and act urgently. The proposed review of progress in the implementation of the MDGs should provide us a renewed opportunity to reinvigorate our development agenda. We urge the developed countries not to let the economic and financial crisis become an excuse for curtailing their aid commitments with regard to the MDGs and other internationally agreed development agendas.

Indeed, as recognized at the Group of 20 Summit in London earlier this year and as so consistently emphasized by our Secretary-General, the people of developing countries, especially the LDCs, need their own international financial rescue package to ensure that we do not backtrack on programmes towards achievement of the MDGs.

Nepal is a country with young mountains and a fragile ecosystem. Global warming, one of the most ruthless signs of climate change, has led to unprecedented melting of the Himalayan snow. Nepal experienced an annual temperature increase of 0.06 Celsius degrees between 1977 and 2000. With that, the threat of glacial lake outbursts has increased. Flash floods have become more frequent and more destructive. Delayed and insufficient rainfall has affected crop production. The poorest of the poor farmers have suffered the worst from all those effects. Agriculture, health, livelihoods and infrastructure are all being affected by them.

Nepal recently hosted a high-level regional conference on climate change focusing on the Himalayan region in order to highlight the seriousness of the problem of global warming and its impacts on the Himalayan range. The unprecedented snow melt in the Himalayas could jeopardize the lives and livelihoods of over 700 million people downstream and in the coastal regions. The conference produced a 10-point understanding that emphasizes, among other factors, the need to put into practice the principles of common but differentiated responsibilities and the respective capabilities and historical responsibility of the developed countries, as envisaged in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, as well as a financing mechanism on adaptation and transfer of technologies to sufficiently meet the urgent and immediate financial needs of the region in a predictable, easy and direct manner.

Concrete actions that match the level of the threat are needed. The other day, we had a fruitful discussion at the Summit on Climate Change, convened by the Secretary-General. While I thank the Secretary-General for that important initiative, I urge all to continue that spirit of positive thinking and to work together to converge all our efforts to find a just and effective solution to the ever-increasing problem of climate change.

The Copenhagen Climate Change Conference should be able to seal the deal and work out a new global compact to address the problem of climate change beyond 2012 in keeping with the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities, with special consideration given to the characteristics, vulnerabilities and weaknesses of the least developed and other developing countries.

The LDCs have particular vulnerabilities associated with their structural constraints, systemic deficiencies and historical socio-economic factors. The bottom half billion people face the daunting task of improving their living standards despite persistent efforts and commitment. Their plight is further exacerbated by the global problems that affect them disproportionately because they do not have cushions

or alternatives. Therefore, their plight deserves special consideration by the international community.

As we prepare for the fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, we need to seriously consider the implementation status of the Brussels Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010, and endeavour to tackle all existing obstacles in our way through a committed and collaborative partnership. We would also emphasize the need for full implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action for landlocked developing countries.

Nuclear non-proliferation, nuclear disarmament and the proliferation of small arms are matters of global concern. We welcome Security Council resolution 1887 (2009), adopted on 24 September 2009, which seeks to contain proliferation, ban nuclear tests and bring about further cuts in nuclear weapons.

Disarmament being a comprehensive issue, we are of the view that promoting regional discourse on disarmament would help build confidence and prepare the groundwork necessary for realizing our eventual goal of general and complete disarmament. In this context, we see an important role for the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific, which has been operating from Kathmandu since last year. We urge Member States to be generous in extending financial support to the Centre for conducting its programmes and activities.

In spite of sustained and concerted efforts on the part of the international community, terrorism continues to pose a serious threat to international peace and security. Nepal strongly condemns terrorism in all its forms and calls for early conclusion of a comprehensive convention against terrorism. We reiterate our commitment to combating international terrorism, including through the implementation of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy (see resolution 60/288) adopted on 8 September 2006 and of various Security Council resolutions, such as resolutions 1373 (2001) and 1540 (2004).

After more than 60 years, there is no denying that the United Nations needs institutional reform and reinvigoration to maintain continued relevance and effectiveness. In this context, we hope that the intergovernmental negotiations started by the General Assembly can lead to significant reform of the United Nations system — including the Security Council, by adding new members in a fair and equitable manner in such a way as to reflect the current realities of the contemporary world.

In an increasingly globalized and interconnected world, the issue of migrant workers has become prominent. Remittances have become one of the major sources of earned foreign currency for almost all the least developed and other developing countries. We therefore urge the international community to adopt a comprehensive approach and policy towards migration, including regarding protection of the rights of migrant workers in the face of the current economic crisis.

We are concerned about the continued deadlock in the World Trade Organization's Doha Development Agenda negotiations, as well as about the new waves of protectionism that are built into the inward-looking stimulus packages being adopted to deal with the global financial and economic crisis. Given the exceptional vulnerabilities of the least developed and landlocked developing countries, developed countries, in accordance with international compacts and commitments such as the 2002 Monterrey Consensus, should immediately make available to them duty-free entry for their exports, debt-relief packages and other capacity-building measures. Such resources are very important to the fight against poverty, hunger, illiteracy and disease in all the least developed countries, particularly those affected by conflict, which encounter huge development challenges in post-conflict recovery.

While peacekeeping remains one of the core activities of the United Nations, its multidimensional nature has posed new managerial and logistical challenges in recent years. Peacekeeping evolved out of necessity, and it has to be adapted to match the new and emerging challenges inherent in today's increasingly complex peacekeeping missions. In this context, we appreciate the Secretariat's "New Horizon" non-paper, aimed at engaging and ensuring broader support from Member States and troop-contributing countries. Let me recall here that Nepal has been one of the longest-standing continuing partners in United Nations peacekeeping missions. Today, we are the fifth largest troop-contributing country. Our commitment to international peace remains as strong as ever, and our support for the United Nations in its peacekeeping activities will continue unabated.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate Nepal's abiding faith in the principles and purposes of the

United Nations Charter. We stress the need for introducing timely reforms in the United Nations and its operational mechanisms, in order to enhance the Organization's role and relevance in the emerging new global order of the twenty-first century. Nepal is always willing to contribute in whatever ways it can to the attainment of the noble objectives of international peace, security, development and prosperity for all.

As a least developed country, engaged in a peace process and in rebuilding post-conflict, Nepal has many challenges to face. My Government is making every effort to meet these challenges and appreciates the support extended by the United Nations. At the same time, we would like the international community to be more generous in assisting us in our national endeavour to institutionalize peace and democracy, rebuild our infrastructure and enhance our economic growth.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Prime Minister of the Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal for the statement he has just made.

The Right Honourable Madhav Kumar Nepal, Prime Minister of the Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by The Honourable Feleti Vaka'uta Sevele, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Tonga

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Tonga.

The Honourable Feleti Vaka'uta Sevele, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Tonga, was escorted to the rostrum.

The President: I have great pleasure in welcoming His Excellency Mr. Feleti Vaka'uta Sevele, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Tonga, and inviting him to address the Assembly.

Mr. Sevele (Tonga): Like previous speakers, I offer you, Sir, my warmest congratulations on your election to the presidency of the General Assembly for this session. I also wish to pay tribute to the Secretary-General for his excellent report on the work of the Organization (A/64/1) and for his continuing leadership during these unprecedented and challenging times. A testament to the Secretary-General's leadership has been his persistent efforts to convene the Summit on Climate Change held earlier this week. For those of us who are also members of the Alliance of Small Island States, our own Summit, held immediately beforehand, was a timely exercise in focusing on the critical issues at stake in the run-up to the Copenhagen Climate Change Conference to be held in December.

Climate change has taken its rightful place at the forefront of many of the statements we have heard this week. In the case of small island developing States like ours, we all need to reach beyond our narrow national interests and embrace our collective responsibility to one another as nation States and to those most vulnerable and least able to address the adverse effects of climate change. At the Pacific Islands Forum, the issue of climate change and the type of collective effort it requires has been at the forefront of the meetings of Pacific leaders, most recently in Cairns under the chairmanship of Prime Minister Kevin Rudd of Australia. Such efforts resulted, earlier this year, in the General Assembly's adoption by consensus of resolution 63/281, on climate change and its security implications.

It has been heartening to hear in this Hall words of action — a determination to move away from the rhetoric of climate change to the reality of action: action to mitigate the effects of climate change and action to stop the waste of our energy resources. But the words of Presidents and Prime Ministers are not enough. They must be matched by action. Our determination and our understanding of the truth of climate change must be propelled by honest efforts to mitigate and change the wasteful energy habits of a lifetime into the productive energy habits of the future.

The lessons of the past year have reinforced our support for reform of the international financial institutions. In particular, we look forward to the outcome of the just-concluded meeting of the Group of 20 in Pittsburgh as further crucial and concerted action following the measures taken in Washington and London.

Despite the uncertain global economic and financial climate, we remain committed to making further progress in achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which remain a core component of our national development planning. Much of that progress has been reliant on our own

domestic efforts, but it has also been assisted by our development partners. In that regard, we support the Secretary-General's convening of a special summit on the MDGs in 2010 as a final push towards 2015. Further, the high-level review of the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, to be carried out the same year, offers us, as small island developing States, a fresh opportunity to take stock of progress and areas for improvement. We also welcome the renewed interest and engagement of the United States of America regarding the Pacific islands.

Earlier this year, my country, the Kingdom of Tonga, in compliance with its obligations under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, lodged a partial submission for the consideration of the Commission on the Outer Limits of the Continental Shelf. This was a significant exercise made possible through our own efforts, with the technical assistance of organizations such as the Commonwealth Secretariat. As we are an island nation, the living marine resources of our maritime zones and the potential of non-living ones remain critical to our future.

We continue to follow the meandering course of the discussions on reform of the Security Council. We maintain our support for such reform and hold the view that there should be an expansion in both the permanent and the non-permanent membership categories.

Since 100 per cent of our power generation is fuelled by imported fossil fuels, our economic potential has been adversely affected by rising fuel prices, which has forced us to investigate feasible renewable sources of energy. We thus have set the target of achieving 50 per cent of our electricity generation utilizing renewable energy sources by the year 2012.

We have reviewed donor funding provided by our development partners to see how best we could achieve that ambitious goal and also fulfil our wish to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. At the conclusion of the regional Pacific Energy Ministers Meeting hosted in Tonga earlier this year, we discussed those issues with our development partners. It very quickly became apparent that a new model for doing business was needed. And so it was that the concept for the Tonga Renewable Energy Road Map was born.

The development partners all agreed to collaborate, under the coordination of the World Bank, to assess the current infrastructure of on-grid and off-grid electrification throughout the Kingdom. The World Bank, the European Union, the Asian Development Bank, Australia, New Zealand and Japan readily accepted this opportunity to actively participate in the development of our Energy Road Map. Those efforts were recently boosted by strong support from the Government of the United Arab Emirates and the International Renewable Energy Agency, which was reaffirmed at bilateral meetings held in New York this week.

Tonga's cultural and constitutional roots are innately enduring. We are proud of our 134-year-old written Constitution, which is one of the oldest in the world and is still in force. Our Constitution enshrined basic human rights and freedoms that today are the subject of international treaties. The Tongan way of life is not based solely on the rights, responsibilities, freedoms and obligations of the individual, but emphasizes rights, responsibilities, freedoms and obligations attaching to the extended family and the whole community. While the values underlying human rights may be expressed differently from Tongan customary and traditional values, and while both reflect similar aspirations, Tonga's strength lies in the binding links of collective group values and individual obligations and responsibilities.

Our parliament recently considered ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). Parliament voted not to ratify CEDAW, because to do so would conflict with the cultural and social heritage that makes up the unique Tongan way of life. We take the ratification of international treaties very seriously. We did not want to ratify CEDAW as a matter of international convenience. We would rather be judged by our actions to empower women than by a ratification of convenience. And we make no apologies for our stance. We admit that there are issues to be addressed. But, rather than ratify CEDAW, we prefer to address those specific areas of concern to women in our own way. We maintain that our women are among the most highly cherished, elevated and respected in the world.

Finally, this month marks the tenth anniversary of Tonga's admission as a Member of the United Nations. We reaffirm the rights and responsibilities bestowed

upon us by the United Nations Charter, and we pledge to continue to participate constructively in addressing our common challenges. Those challenges will be overcome by our action. Given that the United Nations is the forum for united action and given the commitments made by leaders to such action, we may just awake to the fact that it is the good in the world, not the evil, that surpasses all explanation.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Tonga for the statement he has just made.

The Honourable Feleti Vaka'uta Sevele, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Tonga, was escorted from the rostrum.

The President: I now call on His Excellency Mr. Thongloun Sisoulith, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Lao People's Democratic Republic.

Mr. Sisoulith (Lao People's Democratic Republic) (*spoke in Lao; English interpretation provided by the delegation*): At the outset, on behalf of the Lao delegation, I would like to congratulate you, Mr. Ali Abdussalam Treki, on your election as President of the General Assembly at its sixty-fourth session. I trust that, under your able presidency, our session will be guided to a successful outcome. Let me also take this opportunity to express our deepest appreciation to His Excellency Mr. Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann, who presided over the sixty-third session with dedication and distinction. By the same token, I convey our great appreciation to Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for his leadership and his commitment to the work of the Organization at a time when our world is facing numerous grave challenges.

In recent years, the international situation has undergone rapid changes and faced various challenges. The United Nations, a unique world body, has been playing an increasingly important role in maintaining international peace and security and promoting the peaceful settlement of disputes and international cooperation for development. In this rapidly changing world, it is our common duty and responsibility as Members of the United Nations to ensure that the Organization carry out its mandate effectively. To this end, United Nations reform is crucial and should be comprehensive, transparent and balanced, while the Organization should maintain its intergovernmental, universal and democratic character, consistent with th Charter.

The revitalization of the General Assembl reform of the Security Council and the strengthening the Economic and Social Council and specialize agencies should be guided by the principles democracy, transparency and accountability with view to making this universal Organization a body th truly represents the interests of all Member States an seeks their benefit. In this context, the Lao People Democratic Republic welcomes the launching intergovernmental negotiations on Security Counc reform and will continue to contribute to thes important efforts in this new phase of the Securit Council reform process.

The ongoing impasse within the multilater disarmament machinery continues to undermin international peace and security. The existence nuclear weapons remains a grave threat to the existenc of all humankind. It is therefore vital to reaffirm th importance of States honouring their nuclea disarmament and non-proliferation obligations. Th upcoming 2010 Review Conference will be a grea opportunity for the States parties to the Treaty on th Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons to demonstrat strong political commitment by making a collectiv effort to resolve the current stalemate on th non-proliferation and disarmament agenda. In th regard, it is encouraging that the third session of th Preparatory Committee for the 2010 Revie Conference successfully adopted the agenda and a significant procedural decisions, which wi undoubtedly lay an important foundation for productive and successful Review Conference in 2010

In conjunction with arms reduction and nuclea disarmament, the issue of explosive remnants of wa including cluster munitions and unexploded ordnan (UXO), continues to threaten and pose seriou obstacles to socio-economic development and povert eradication efforts in more than 80 countries across th world. Among these, the Lao People's Democrati Republic is the most affected. The victims of cluste munitions in the Lao People's Democratic Republic – where approximately 300 victims have been recorde every year for the 30 years since the war ended – account for 50 per cent of the global total of cluste munitions victims. This is due to the fact that 37 pe cent of national territory remains contaminated b UXO. Enormous financial resources would be neede

to resolve this problem, and it would take a great length of time to clear UXOs from those areas needed most for development and the everyday livelihoods of communities. However, a precise estimate has yet to be made as to how many hundreds of years it would take to clear all UXO-contaminated areas across the country.

In light of the adverse impact of cluster munitions, the Lao People's Democratic Republic attaches great importance to the Convention on banning and eradicating cluster munitions. In this context, we welcome and commend those countries that have signed and ratified the Convention, and hope that other countries that have not done so will follow suit so that Convention may enter into force as soon as possible. In order to prepare for the future implementation of the Convention, the Lao Government has offered to host the first conference of States parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions after it enters into force. We hope that our offer will receive broad support from all countries and international organizations.

Despite the fact that peace, development and cooperation are the lodestars of our times, tensions, conflicts, violence, terrorism and threats to security persist in various parts of the world. The Lao People's Democratic Republic is deeply dismayed by the prolonged conflict in the Middle East, which continues to inflict immense suffering on millions of people in the region, in particular the Palestinian people, who have been struggling to exercise their legitimate and inalienable rights to self-determination and statehood. Although we have heard in the course of our general debate many expressions of encouragement and renewed hope for addressing the Middle East problem, this can be realized only if all parties concerned demonstrate their commitment to addressing the impasse with a view to realizing the vision of two States, Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace and security within recognized borders, in accordance with the relevant resolutions of the Security Council.

We also remain concerned over the decades-long economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed on the Republic of Cuba. It is now time to end these sanctions.

Climate change continues to be a pressing concern and to pose enormous challenges to the survival of humankind. Against this backdrop, global measures that conform to the principle of common but differentiated responsibility are urgently required. To this end, the integration of the three pillars of sustainable development — economic development, social development and environmental protection — should be enhanced with a view to effectively implementing the Bali Action Plan.

In this context, we highly commend the Secretary-General for his initiative to convene the high-level Summit on Climate Change on 22 September 2009, at which world leaders had the opportunity to discuss concrete measures and potential solutions to the consequences of climate change, as well as to prepare for the Climate Change Conference to be held in Copenhagen, Denmark. Furthermore, world leaders have made strong commitments to taking the necessary action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, promote the green economy, provide mitigation and adaptation assistance, and generate alternative energy, including through technology transfer from developed to developing countries, in order to enable the latter to adapt to the consequences and impacts of climate change.

The Lao People's Democratic Republic welcomes and supports the recommendation to launch a new Global Compact entailing a green New Deal, which would no doubt provide an excellent platform for addressing the current global challenges, promoting investment in the green economy, laying the foundations to deal with the crucial long-term issues, and helping to create a future based on a low-carbon economy, renewable energy and energy efficiency.

The multiple global crises, especially the financial and economic crises, have had many adverse effects on developing countries, in particular on the most vulnerable groups. This is due primarily to the lack of basic infrastructure, access to markets, resources and modern technology, and to the fact that capacity to provide financing and investment remains low. In response, various forms of consultation and approach have been undertaken in an attempt to mitigate the long-term impacts of the crisis. In this regard, we welcome the initiatives of the Group of Eight, the Group of 20 and other international forums to build a mechanism that will help find solutions to the crisis, including the recommendations of the high-level Conference on the World Financial and Economic Crisis held here in June this year.

As one of the most vulnerable countries in the world, the Lao People's Democratic Republic is of the view that all initiatives and measures undertaken must be implemented effectively and in a timely manner. In particular, it is important to address the unpredictability and vulnerability of commodity markets, provide preferential treatment to goods from developing countries, especially those from the most vulnerable ones, ensure the smooth resolution of debt issues, improve technology transfer mechanism and reform the international financial system.

The fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, to be held in early 2011, will provide a good opportunity for the international community to review its responsibilities and commitments pledged to the least developed countries, as well as to identify obstacles and constraints and seek possible solutions to them, particularly in the wake of such a profound economic and financial crisis.

The solid political stability and social order in the Lao People's Democratic Republic have provided favourable conditions for national economic development. Nevertheless, the Lao People's Democratic Republic has also been adversely affected at a certain level by the recent global economic and financial crisis. The crisis has caused a slowdown in economic development, with growth of the main economic sectors such as industry, services and agriculture decreasing by 2 to 3 per cent. The trade sector was also affected, with exports dropping by 28 per cent.

Against this backdrop, the Lao Government has undertaken urgent action by identifying eight measures and 80 priority areas to address. As a result of such action, the Lao People's Democratic Republic has been able to mitigate the adverse impact of the crisis to a certain degree. However, owing to the uncertainty of today's global economy, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, like other developing countries, remains vulnerable and still needs the support and cooperation from the international community to respond to the crisis, with a view to preventing long-term impacts, which may occur at any time, and to achieving the Millennium Development Goals and our ultimate national goal of being removed from the list of least developed countries by 2020.

Today, more than ever, the international community has the responsibility, as well as the opportunity, to promote solidarity and strengthen international cooperation in jointly addressing these global problems, as no country can weather alone the threats and challenges confronting it. In this spirit, the Lao People's Democratic Republic reiterates its unshakable commitment to continue full cooperation with the international community in pursuit of a world free from fear and want, rooted in a new, just and equitable order. I believe that, with great solidarity, we will be able to achieve the aforementioned goals.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now call on His Excellency Mr. Ahmed Aboul Gheit, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Arab Republic of Egypt.

Mr. Aboul Gheit (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): Mr. President, on behalf of the African continent, allow me at the outset to congratulate our sisterly country, Libya, and you personally, on your assumption of the presidency of the General Assembly, and to express our confidence that your leadership will lead to achieving the success to which we aspire. I would also like to reaffirm the full support of Egypt and the Non-Aligned Movement for you in the fulfilment of your mission.

Our session this year convenes against the backdrop of international crises unprecedented in their nature and scope. The list of global challenges we are facing, such as climate change, the food crisis and the crises in international peace, is supplemented by additional emerging global challenges that make it essential for us to redouble our efforts in a coordinated and collective manner.

The global financial crisis, together with the spread of diseases, such as the H1N1 virus, threatens public health worldwide. Meeting this challenge requires a high degree of conscientious collective work and a shared awareness of the effect that such a crisis could have in many of our countries on stability in the economic, social, even political, and perhaps security spheres.

With regard to collective work on the international level, we should not overlook the fact that the current international structures designed to manage the realities of the global economy must reflect a balance between the present and future. Therefore, those structures must be subject to change, so as to become more compatible with current reality.

The change I refer to here is a gradual and strategic shift, one which would make membership in

such structures accessible to a larger number of developing countries and would grant them a stronger and more effective voice in determining the course of the world economic order and its future.

A few days ago, we all took part in the climate change summit, convened upon the initiative of the Secretary-General, and listened to all the pledges made and the concerns expressed. While Egypt is aware of the seriousness of the phenomenon in question and the gravity of the challenges that climate change is imposing on all of us, we believe in the possibility that collective work could provide new opportunities for advancing development in developing societies in a manner that would allow the agreed sustainable development principles to be fulfilled. In this respect, we look forward, as was stated by President Mubarak at the L'Aquila summit in Italy in July 2009, to arriving at a fair and balanced deal at the upcoming Copenhagen conference in December that would take into consideration the aspirations and rights of developing countries and, at the same time, address all crucial issues, including mitigation, adaptation, financing and technology transfer.

A fair and balanced deal should further ensure the fulfilment of commitments by developed countries, and enable our developing countries to implement their voluntary commitments within the framework of honest application of the principle of common but differentiated responsibility.

The world financial crisis did not originate in, nor was it caused by, developing countries. However, they are all suffering from its consequences in different forms and at different levels as a result of the decrease in the volume of international trade, the tightening of international credit terms and the decline in tourist inflows and monetary remittances.

The current international economic recession has no doubt negatively affected most States. However, States of the South remain the most affected, due to the negative repercussions of the recession on public spending in health care, education and sustainable development in general. The parallel economic, financial and food crises that we are still confronting undoubtedly compound the hardships faced by the countries of the South in particular, and place enormous burdens on us in terms of preserving economic and social security in our countries.

To confront such challenges, serious and genuine international support and solidarity are required, based on enhancing agricultural development with a view to increasing production and productivity. Furthermore, there is an urgent need to launch an international dialogue between exporting and importing countries in the developing and developed worlds alike, in order to agree on an international strategy to confront the crisis, and to formulate an international code of conduct to review the policies that govern the use of biofuels. In addition, we must reach an agreement under the umbrella of the World Trade Organization that eliminates agricultural subsidy programmes that are in operation in some developed countries.

To confront the energy crisis, it is important to have a genuine, broad dialogue among the relevant parties to identify the best available options. The situation requires securing increased development assistance and further investments in the markets of energy-producing developing countries, as well as confronting irresponsible speculation on international markets.

In this context, Egypt hopes that the 2010 high-level meeting to follow up on the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) will expedite renewal of international commitment and solidarity towards achieving the Goals. A comprehensive assessment of what has been achieved thus far in the implementation of the MDGs must be carried out and a mechanism established to follow up on implementation. This should lead to full implementation by 2015, particularly in Africa, which is witnessing low implementation rates, an issue which needs to be effectively addressed.

Undoubtedly, all of these challenges oblige the countries of the South to strengthen mutual cooperation. As current Chair of the Non-Aligned Movement, Egypt will work to enhance South-South cooperation in coordination with the Group of 77 and China. We look forward to a successful United Nations conference on South-South cooperation, to be held in Kenya later this year, aimed at further strengthening this cooperation.

Having spoken of the interlinked crises facing the world today, I would like to address an important issue related to the human rights architecture of the United Nations system. Despite the radical reform ushered in by the establishment of the Human Rights Council,

Egypt is still dissatisfied with respect to the politicization of human rights issues. This politicization weakens the potential to reach consensus on a variety of issues that should not be subject to differences as they are of concern to us all and affect the credibility of the work of the United Nations in this vital field. Hence, Egypt is determined to exert its utmost effort to engage with other States in order to bring divergent views closer together and to establish common ground to restore the international consensus that binds us all, which forms the basis for our actions in this important area in the Human Rights Council and in the General Assembly.

In that context, we look forward to a greater role for the Human Rights Council. Every one of us should address the issue of the incitement of religious hatred and racism under the pretext of freedom of expression. We look forward to, and in fact have already begun to seek, commonly agreed language for a draft resolution on freedom of expression, to underscore the importance of this freedom as an indispensable cornerstone of any democratic society, while avoiding the depiction of acts of incitement to religious, racial and other forms of hatred as legitimate acts of freedom of expression. We categorically reject such a depiction.

Turning to issues of international peace and security, I will begin with disarmament. Egypt attaches great importance to a successful conclusion of the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), in the hope that nuclear disarmament and the nuclear non-proliferation regime will be put back on the right track. This will depend on dealing effectively with the decisions and the resolutions of the 1995 and 2000 Review Conferences, in particular the resolution on the Middle East.

It is crucial that the international community as a whole support the current active momentum in the international arena with regard to disarmament issues, especially in the light of developments in the positions of the main nuclear-weapon States, in particular the United States. We have listened to their statements, in particular the address by President Obama to the Assembly on 23 September (see A/64/PV.3), and we hope that these evolving positions will provide an opportunity for making historic progress in this regard.

In the same context, it is necessary to effectively deal with the issues of regional stability and security, mainly through eliminating the incomprehensible and unjustified lassitude in dealing with the issue of Israeli nuclear capabilities and the persistent threat they pose to security and stability in the Middle East. This is especially true in the context of intensified efforts to expand the commitments of the non-nuclear States parties to the NPT, without due regard for the need to achieve the Treaty's universality — and if there is no commitment, there should be no universality — and to subject all nuclear facilities in the Middle East to the comprehensive safeguards regime of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). Egypt will continue its diligent work to address this situation in all relevant international forums and to highlight the risks, with the aim of effecting changes in the situation.

The situation in the Middle East region is still dominated by considerable tension, a tendency towards confrontation and lack of stability. Notwithstanding the tireless efforts exerted to stabilize the situation, many parties still consider it beneficial to exacerbate that tension.

The question of Palestine clearly remains far from being resolved, despite international concern and all the serious efforts, pressure, contacts, visits and meetings. Since I questioned in this Assembly last year (see A/63/PV.13) the existence of genuine Israeli determination to achieve a just peace with the Palestinians, events have thus far justified our scepticism.

Throughout this year, Israel has shown a lack of the political will necessary to engage in serious and credible negotiations that aim at reaching a final settlement to the conflict, a settlement which encompasses all the elements, tracks and topics and which leads to the establishment of an independent Palestinian State on the complete Palestinian national territory, occupied since 1967, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

In this respect, I would like to sum up the Egyptian view of the situation with the following elements, including what we hope to achieve.

First, intensive work during the coming period is necessary in order to resume the negotiating process as soon as possible. The international community should put forward a formula for a final settlement to the conflict — the so-called end game — cognizant of the need to waste no more time in studying details that

everyone knows will not help to realize the desired settlement.

Secondly, Israel's commitment to completely freeze settlement activity in all occupied Palestinian territories, including East Jerusalem, must be secured, not only because such activity is contrary to international law and should be halted, but also in order to build a climate of trust between the two parties, thus allowing final-status negotiations to bear fruit. Such Israeli commitment would pave the way to restoring lost credibility in efforts to achieve peace. On the other hand, any retreat from that commitment would inflict severe harm on the prospects for peace in the coming period.

Thirdly, the freeze of Israeli settlement activity should occur simultaneously and in parallel with the negotiations, in order to bolster Palestinian trust in Israeli intentions.

Fourthly, if an agreement is reached on the final borders of the State to be established on the Palestinian national soil occupied in 1967, on the understanding that the State's borders are essentially those of 1967, as had been agreed by both parties during the 2008 negotiations with the participation of the United States, that agreement could be gradually implemented at a pace to be agreed upon by both parties and within a time-bound framework.

Fifthly, East Jerusalem is an integral part of the occupied Palestinian territories. As one of the issues to be included in final status negotiations, it should under no circumstances be excluded from any future negotiations.

Sixthly, Israel's engagement in a serious, credible, clear and time-bound negotiating process would restore the situation on other issues to that which prevailed in the 1990s in terms of Arab interaction with Israel, with a view to enhancing mutual trust and thus boosting negotiating efforts as a whole.

Egypt is closely following the situation in sisterly Sudan with the same high level of interest, not only because of the historical bonds between our two peoples and nations but also out of concern for the Sudan's future, stability and territorial integrity and our awareness of the numerous threats facing it. Egypt is working earnestly with all Sudanese parties, foremost among which is the Sudanese Government, and in coordination with influential regional and international stakeholders to resolve existing problems. Our sons take part in the United Nations forces in South Sudan and in Darfur, and we contribute — out of our limited resources — to efforts to support development and provide health care to our brothers and sisters in the south and west of the Sudan. We hope that the Sudanese people, in their wisdom and with the support they receive from their neighbours and international partners, will be able to weather the upcoming critical phase, so that the Sudan's unity can withstand all future tests and so that unity becomes the first and the most attractive option for all Sudanese. This is an important objective, which Egypt is working diligently to achieve.

We cannot conclude our comments on the Middle East without referring to security in the Arab Gulf region, which is among Egypt's main interests and at the top of its foreign policy priorities. This focus is not only based on the strong bonds that connect us with the member States of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), but also on our firm conviction that Egypt represents a strategic asset for its Arab brothers in the Gulf area. For this reason, Egypt will work with GCC countries to ensure Arab regional security and that any security arrangements that are being contemplated by international or regional parties will correspond fully to the needs and concerns of the Arab Gulf States.

In conclusion, the fifteenth Summit Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries, held in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt, on 15 and 16 July 2009, adopted four main declarations. The first is the Sharm el-Sheikh Declaration, which contains our member States' clear vision on the most critical current issues that constitute a priority for our work within the United Nations. These include in particular the issues of disarmament and international security, peacekeeping and peacebuilding, human rights and democracy, the right of peoples to self-determination, the situation in the Middle East and the Palestinian question, the reform of the United Nations, unilateral sanctions, the global financial and economic crisis, internationally agreed development goals, food security, Africa's special needs, diseases and pandemics, the role of civil society, climate change, energy, human trafficking, international terrorism and dialogue among civilizations and religions. The second declaration is on the necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the

United States of America against Cuba. The third is on designating 18 July as International Nelson Mandela Day. The fourth is a declaration on Palestine. These declarations will be issued as official documents of the United Nations.

Last July, following the chairmanship of the friendly country of Cuba, Egypt assumed leadership of the Non-Aligned Movement for the next three years. We are determined to implement the provisions of the Summit's final document according to the priorities set out in those declarations. We shall put forward at this session the pertinent draft resolutions and decisions to implement those documents. The delegation of Egypt will be pleased to work with all Member States in a spirit of openness and determination to make this session a success. We extend a hand to all States with an open mind and the resolve to achieve success on the international agenda before us.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to Mr. Nasser Judeh, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.

Mr. Judeh (Jordan) (*spoke in Arabic*): First of all, I would like very warmly to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to preside over the General Assembly at its sixty-fourth session. I am certain that, thanks to your recognized experience and wisdom, you will be able to enrich our discussions and provide an appropriate framework for our deliberations. That will ensure that, through our joint efforts, this session is a productive and special one that strengthens the role and improves the work of the Organization as the principal international body for multilateral action and the fulcrum of our joint efforts. I should also like to commend your predecessor, Mr. Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann, for his efforts during the previous session, which we appreciate. I also thank and commend His Excellency Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon.

We are pleased to see concrete trends towards enhancing multilateralism in the United Nations. We are convinced that such a course of action is the best and most effective way to reach agreement and take up the complex international challenges we face. These challenges cannot be confronted by one country on its own, because they are transnational and complex in nature and require concerted international action under the auspices of a single international organization in which all participate. Although some have doubted the effectiveness of the United Nations and its ability to address the challenges and problems of the twenty-first century, there is no doubt that, because of the universality of its membership, it remains the ideal forum to address the current challenges facing peoples and Governments, of which we are all aware. As we are all aware, the current tendency to marginalize multilateral efforts — particularly those of the United Nations — has negative effects that only make problems more complex, instead of helping to overcome or resolve them.

The United Nations and its subsidiary organs require reform, including financial and administrative reform, so that the Organization can be fully effective in addressing present and future international challenges. Such challenges have arisen as a result of structural and systemic changes since the establishment of the Organization, as well as technological advancements, such as the information and communications revolution, and the well-known effects of globalization. All of this has made the world a global village in which everybody feels the negative effects of problems and challenges such as desertification, climate change, terrorism, poverty, pandemics and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

Among the major achievements of the United Nations is its pioneering role in seeking to eliminate colonization and occupation in order to ensure the right of all peoples to self-determination. Although the Organization has assumed ongoing responsibility for the question of Palestine, Israel has, unfortunately, been occupying Palestinian and Arab territories since 1967 to prevent the Palestinian people from exercising their right to self-determination by creating an independent State on their national soil in the West Bank and Gaza, with East Jerusalem as its capital, on the basis of the line of 4 June 1967. Israel continues also to occupy the Syrian Golan and some Lebanese territory. For their part, the Arabs adopted the Arab Peace Initiative at the 2002 Beirut Summit and have reaffirmed its principles at all subsequent Arab summits, including that held in Doha last spring.

Discussions continue on the two-State solution and on a comprehensive peace, which would permit the establishment of an independent Palestinian State and enable Syria and Lebanon to recover their occupied territories. That would provide a just and agreed solution to the question of Palestinian refugees in accordance with the provisions of resolution 194 (III),

which would ensure peace and security, with recognition of Israel by all Arab States. Israel continues to reject the Arab and international option of a just and comprehensive peace and a two-State solution under the international terms of reference and the Arab Peace Initiative. Therefore, a good-faith response reflecting genuine and positive political will must be forthcoming.

There has been unprecedented support in the international community — including in the Arab world and among the Palestinians — for the considerable and sincere efforts being made by United States President Barack Obama and his Administration with a view to the holding of serious negotiations leading to the two-State solution and the establishment of a comprehensive peace in the Middle East, which would be in the interest of the United States, Palestine, the Arabs, the Israelis and the entire world. We in Jordan, under the auspices of His Majesty King Abdullah Bin Al Hussein, son of His late Majesty King Hussein, continue to strive tirelessly to attain that noble objective, which our people deserve.

The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan fully supports the statement made by United States President Barack Obama on 23 September (see A/64/PV.3). It provided a clear vision of a definitive solution and of terms of reference that would end the 1967 Israeli occupation in order to permit the establishment of a viable, independent Palestinian State with contiguous territory, living side by side in peace and security with Israel, and achieve peace among Syria, Lebanon and Israel. With regard to the political terms of reference for negotiations between the Palestinians and the Israelis, President Obama stated that the final-status issues of security for Israelis and Palestinians, borders, refugees and Jerusalem were key to successful negotiations. We appreciate the importance of his comments regarding the illegality of the settlements.

Thus, President Obama has demonstrated his firm commitment to a two-State solution and a comprehensive peace in the Middle East. Since his first day in office, he has continued to seek to create a constructive atmosphere conducive to the swift resumption of serious negotiations, on all issues and on all tracks.

The international community as a whole must also shoulder its responsibility to ensure the swift resumption of negotiations and their success. In that connection, I wish to express our appreciation and full support to His Excellency President Mahmoud Abbas for his commitment to peace based on genuine partnership, fundamental Palestinian and Arab principles and the international framework, as well as his sincere engagement on behalf of the Palestinian Authority in all efforts to achieve a two-State solution, which was demonstrated once again at the tripartite meeting organized by President Obama in New York at the beginning of this week.

This constructive and appropriate atmosphere has been marred by the actions of Israel, which refuses to halt its settlement activities, including in occupied East Jerusalem, where it continues to take unilateral action. Its excavations continue under and around the Al-Aqsa mosque and other areas that are part of the Islamic and Christian cultural heritage. It continues to demolish the homes of Arabs and to expel them. Israel is doing this in order to alter the demographic character of East Jerusalem, which has an Arab religious and historical identity. It is at the heart of the occupied territories and is inextricable from them. The Security Council and the General Assembly have declared those Israeli actions null and void.

From this rostrum today, we ask Israel to return to the peace process that everyone supports and to put an end to its illegal measures, including its settlement activities, in order to create an atmosphere conducive to the resumption of serious and productive peace negotiations on all tracks, in particular on such issues as monitoring mechanisms that include clear timetables and benchmarks for assessing the status of mutual implementation once negotiations have ended.

There can be no doubt that the United Nations has a direct role and an obligation in this regard, given its permanent responsibility for the question of Palestine, alongside the role of the Quartet, which we fully support. The Organization could also play a bigger part in the negotiations and verification mechanisms, as well as on other crucial issues.

We reaffirm the importance of the role of the members of the Quartet — the European Union, the Russian Federation, the United States and the United Nations. The blockade on Gaza must be lifted. Every day, our people there are suffering tragically, and they lack basic commodities. It is unacceptable and unreasonable that the siege should continue and the

situation persist. The inhumane blockade must be ended and Gaza must be rehabilitated.

We hope that Palestinian reconciliation efforts are successful, and we fully support Egypt's efforts in that regard. We should pay particular attention to the report of the United Nations Fact-Finding Mission on the Gaza Conflict (A/HRC/12/48), and we hope that it will promote the necessary follow-up.

The United Nations has played a central role in establishing an international human rights protection system and international mechanisms for promoting human rights and fundamental freedoms. The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan is honoured to have been a member of the Human Rights Council twice since its establishment. We appreciate the international recognition of our policies on the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms, adopted by my country under King Abdullah II.

In addition, the United Nations provided the impetus for international efforts to establish the International Criminal Court as a permanent international judicial body to try cases of war crimes, crimes against humanity and flagrant violations of human rights. Jordan actively participated in the Rome Diplomatic Conference that brought about the adoption of the Court's Statute. We had the privilege of chairing the first meeting of States members of the Court.

The United Nations has also played a significant role in codifying international humanitarian law: its Charter prohibits recourse to the use or the threat of use of force in international relations. The Organization subsequently supported the adoption of the major international conventions on that issue, in particular the four Geneva Conventions, of which we are marking the sixtieth anniversary, as well as the 1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict.

The United Nations has made great progress on the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, in particular nuclear weapons, through the unlimited extension in 1995 of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). Here, we call for compliance with the other decisions accompanying the decision to extend the NPT from 1995 and for recognition of the Middle East region as a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction.

We affirm our country's commitment to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, while also reaffirming our legitimate right to the peaceful use of nuclear energy and to strengthening control mechanisms that would prevent peaceful programmes from being used as a cover for military ones. We are resolved to make peaceful use of nuclear energy, and we have adopted all the agreements, documents and verification mechanisms of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan supports all international efforts to bring into force the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. We encourage countries to adopt and ratify the Treaty so that it may enter into force as soon as possible, which would be a step forward towards nuclear disarmament. We call for adherence to Security Council resolution 1887 (2009), adopted on 24 September.

My country has always been and will remain at the forefront in the fight against terrorism and extremism and in working to bring religions and civilizations closer together, as well as in transmitting the true and admirable essence of Islam and its noble human values. We have therefore adopted important initiatives, including the Amman Message issued by His Majesty the King, and its accompanying document, the Good Word.

Jordan supports comprehensive national reconciliation in Iraq among all segments of the population, with no exception. It supports efforts to consolidate peace and security in Iraq in all spheres so as to ensure civil peace, territorial integrity, political independence and sovereignty and to stop all external interference in its internal affairs so that that brother country can fully recover its place in the region and in the world at large.

Finally, Jordan is committed to international peace and security. We participate actively in peacekeeping operations. The number of personnel that we contribute to the various peacekeeping operations in which we are taking part is growing and becoming geographically broader. This demonstrates that we are truly playing an active role in the United Nations, because we are backing up our words with action. It also shows our clear political resolve to contribute to serious multilateral action within the United Nations system.

I would like to reiterate that we will do what is necessary, and more, to strengthen multilateral international action for efforts to implement a two-State solution and to achieve comprehensive peace in the Middle East, and for anything that contributes to international cooperation and to bringing together diverse civilizations, which would enrich the lives of our societies in the world that we share.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now call on His Excellency Mr. Miroslav Lajčak, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Slovak Republic.

Mr. Lajčak (Slovakia): It is a great privilege and honour for me to address the General Assembly, to which people of the world look with high hopes and expectations to find effective solutions to the multitude of challenges and threats that spare no one.

First, let me congratulate you, Sir, on the assumption of your duties as President of the General Assembly at the sixty-fourth session and also express my delegation's appreciation to your predecessor, His Excellency Mr. Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann, for his work during the sixty-third session.

Slovakia fully associates itself with the statement delivered earlier by the Prime Minister of Sweden on behalf of the European Union. I would like to contribute to this debate with some additional remarks.

Slovakia is a keen believer in effective multilateralism and the central role of the United Nations in that regard. We therefore greatly welcome the main theme of our deliberations during this general debate, with a focus on achieving tangible results on the three pillars of the work of the United Nations: peace and security, human rights and development.

We welcome the attention that the Organization has paid to the issue of climate change, as well as to increasing food security and eliminating the negative effects of the financial and economic crisis, especially in the most vulnerable States and populations. Slovakia calls for reaching an ambitious, balanced and comprehensive agreement on climate change in Copenhagen at the end of 2009 that will replace the Kyoto Protocol. Also, we need to elaborate an action plan and strengthen global strategies for food security in the world. It is essential not to lose sight of the Millennium Development Goals and to maintain our efforts to achieve them by the year 2015.

We have in recent years invested considerable effort in elaborating and implementing our own concept of official development assistance, through a number of bilateral and multilateral projects. The western Balkans, Central Asia, Afghanistan and Africa have been among our priority geographic areas in this regard.

Slovakia's commitment to the issues of economic and social development prompted us to present our candidature for membership of the United Nations Economic and Social Council at the elections to be held in the General Assembly later this year. We appreciate the endorsement of our candidature by the Group of Eastern European and other States and will do our best to gain the trust and support of all of the Organization's Member States. Slovakia is committed to serving as an active and engaged member of the Economic and Social Council, and would like to contribute tangibly to making that important United Nations organ as relevant and as effective as possible.

The United Nations has achieved remarkable results in peacekeeping over past decades. We recognize its continued efforts to adapt peacekeeping so that it can respond better to current and future challenges. More emphasis should be put on ensuring that peacekeepers and other United Nations actors on the ground are properly equipped and trained, including in the area of the so-called critical capabilities. It is our belief that preventive diplomacy should be used whenever possible in order to avoid conflicts in the first place.

Slovakia continues to be actively engaged in numerous peace and security endeavours of the international community. We are currently participating in international crisis-management operations under United Nations command or Security Council mandate in Afghanistan, Cyprus, Kosovo, Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Middle East. We are doing our best to contribute to peacekeeping, peacebuilding, stabilization and reconstruction efforts in those parts of the world and will continue to do so in the future.

In addition, Slovakia remains actively engaged in the area of security sector reform, an issue that we began promoting within the United Nations during our non-permanent membership in the Security Council. Slovakia, as the initiator and chair of the United Nations Group of Friends of Security Sector Reform, will continue working to ensure that the United

Nations system is able to react in an adequate, timely and systematic manner to the needs of Member States relating to security sector reform. After a useful African regional workshop, held in Cape Town as a joint South African and Slovak project, we have now teamed up with key partners, namely, Argentina and Indonesia, in two other important regions, Latin America and South-East Asia. The Buenos Aires workshop will be held just a few days from now.

As I have already mentioned, we are glad to see that significant progress has been achieved in preventive diplomacy, conflict prevention and mediation support. This has recently been demonstrated, for example, in the role played by United Nations mediation teams in helping to find peaceful and negotiated solutions to crises in Kenya, Zimbabwe, Madagascar and elsewhere. Slovakia will contribute further to that work. We are, in this regard, very pleased that the first United Nations Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy, located in Central Asia and led by a Slovak representative, has achieved good results so far and has fully proved itself as a meaningful and necessary project. We are convinced that issues such as conflict prevention cannot be seen in isolation. They are connected with respect for human rights, protection of civilians, gender equality, protection of children in armed conflict and so forth. As a serving member of the United Nations Human Rights Council, Slovakia works to promote universal respect for the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms for all, at national and international levels.

Among the key tools that the United Nations has at its disposal for protecting those who are most endangered and vulnerable is the concept of responsibility to protect, one of the most important achievements of the 2005 World Summit. We believe the international community should focus more on the protection of civilian populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. Nor can we forget our obligation, under international law, to prevent the incitement of those most serious crimes, which should be referred to the International Criminal Court, established for the purpose of ending impunity for perpetrators of such crimes.

Much of the Organization's ability to deal with current threats and challenges depends on the existing institutional framework. The United Nations Security Council is at the centre of that framework. Slovakia is a long-term advocate of enlarging the Security Council in both of its membership categories. The composition of an enlarged Security Council should better reflect new global realities. Appropriate attention must also be paid to the Council's working methods. We are pleased that the intergovernmental negotiations have begun and believe that things will move forward in the interest of making the Security Council a truly relevant and efficient body.

The old saying "If you seek peace, prepare for war" has resulted in an unprecedented arms race, which in itself has become a source of fear and insecurity. Slovakia is particularly concerned about the risk of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery falling into the hands of non-State actors, especially terrorist groups. In this connection, Slovakia is ready to work with all partners towards the successful outcome of the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, which should result in an enhanced international nuclear non-proliferation regime. Our priority is to outlaw nuclear testing and see the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty come into force. Slovakia also calls for an early start to substantive negotiations on an arms trade treaty, which is essential for reducing the unacceptable human cost resulting from the proliferation of conventional arms.

Slovakia, together with the other members of the European Union, is deeply concerned about Iran's continued defiance despite its international obligations, including the Security Council's demands that it suspend its nuclear activities. We note that Iran has agreed to continue talks with the P5+1 group of the five permanent members of the Security Council plus Germany, and we call on Iran to commit to diplomatic negotiations in order to restore the trust of the international community and make real and urgently needed progress. The deteriorating human rights situation and the violent suppression of the popular protests that erupted in Iran after the elections in June is a cause of much concern to Slovakia. We have also repeatedly and strongly condemned the nuclear test and missile launches carried out by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. We call on North Korea to reverse its position on the Non-Proliferation Treaty and join the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty.

Let me now turn to some regional issues that Slovakia pays particular attention to. As a matter of priority, Slovakia has been closely following

developments in the western Balkans. We continue to promote full respect for international law, including the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States within their internationally recognized borders. At the same time, we welcome and support a peaceful and constructive approach to seeking solutions to disputes. We believe that the future of the entire region and its people lies in the European perspective and that there is no meaningful alternative to that.

Promotion of full respect for international law and the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States within their internationally recognized borders is also the principle that guides us in the case of Georgia. Slovakia was very disappointed when, earlier this year, the Security Council was unable to agree on extending the mandate of the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia. The termination of the Mission complicates the already unstable situation in the region, as well as the security conditions for civilians in the conflict zone. We firmly support a peaceful and lasting solution to the conflict in Georgia and hope that the Geneva talks will yield positive results.

In addition to participating in the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus operation on a long-term basis, Slovakia has been actively engaged for more than 20 years in the confidence-building process between the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot political leaders, and we are committed to continuing our active engagement. A combination of military and development aid activities characterizes our long-term active engagement in Afghanistan. Slovakia, as a member of the International Security Assistance Force operation, is helping to establish a secure and stable environment in Afghanistan.

In conclusion, Slovakia hopes that the last year of the first decade of this millennium will bring all the States of the international community closer together in order to overcome the negative consequences of the financial and economic crisis, among others.

This represents a basic step towards the possible settlement of many other conflicts and problems that the international community is facing. In our view, we have to intensify our efforts, in this regard, and adopt appropriate measures on the local, regional and global levels in the spirit of solidarity and common responsibility. We strongly believe that the United Nations and its specialized agencies must be directly engaged in this process and guide the world for the welfare of this generation and of those of the future.

I should like once again to reaffirm Slovakia's support for your work, which, through pursuing the priorities of the General Assembly at its sixty-fourth session, will address the main ills that pain the international community today.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now call on His Excellency Mr. Taib Fassi Fihri, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of the Kingdom of Morocco.

Mr. Fihri (*spoke in Arabic*): On behalf of the Kingdom of Morocco, I should like to congratulate you warmly, Sir, on your election to the presidency of the General-Assembly of the United Nations at its sixty-fourth session. We are proud to see a son of a brotherly country from our region at the helm of this universal body. You may rest assured that our delegation is prepared fully to support your endeavours aimed at ensuring a greater role for our Organization in meeting the challenges of today's world.

I wish also to seize this opportunity to express our appreciation and support to His Excellency Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for his tireless efforts not only to realize the objectives for which our Organization was created, but also to enable the Organization to fulfil the aspirations of the peoples of the world in the course of this third millennium.

The global crises, owing to their universal impact, multifaceted nature and wide implications, have given additional impetus to our collective action and strengthened coordination among the different constituents of this universal body. Today, the world is facing recurrent and unprecedented crises in the fields of economics, finance, food and energy that have shaken the foundations of universal governance. These crises have also adversely affected the socio-economic and environmental systems of all States, especially in developing countries.

As the most representative Organization in the world, the United Nations embodies the living conscience of the international community. As such, it is the most appropriate forum for coordinated joint action and for the reactivation of collective initiatives in order to analyse the root causes of such crises and contain their impact through the adoption of agreed solutions likely to mitigate their effects. Effective and

fair economic governance is dependent on the revitalization of the multilateral system based on realism, efficiency and innovation as a means of finding solutions that reflect the aspirations and hopes of present and future generations.

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were adopted as a common platform for action with clear objectives and a time frame for their implementation, with a view to achieving human development in the world. Much progress has been achieved in many States thanks to the efforts of the international community since the Millennium Summit. However, the progress made towards those goals has not been consistent or steady within States or among States in general. The negative implications of the current economic crisis may exacerbate those disparities, especially in Africa. The few years that remain before 2015 thus require us to adopt a coordinated global approach and to build real partnerships in order to mobilize additional financial resources in line with the commitments made in the Monterrey Consensus and the Doha Declaration on Financing for Development as well as in the declarations of the Group of Eight and the Group of 20.

In this context, Morocco hopes that the fourth high-level meeting on financing for development, to be held in November 2009 in New York, will yield results commensurate with the expectations of the developing countries, thus giving new impetus to efforts to attain the Millennium Development Goals, thus leading to the formation of an international alliance for African development in the framework of coordinated efforts and initiatives aimed at achieving the Goals within specific time frames. We also hope that the United Nations agencies that are active in the area of development will mainstream the Millennium Development Goals and use them as the main and appropriate framework for their action. In this context, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in particular should use the Millennium Development Goals as practical and comprehensively agreed upon indicators when drafting its report on human development. The MDGs provide a practical and qualitative, not only quantitative, way to measure living that better reflects the ever-evolving concept of development.

In keeping with this vision, the National Initiative for Human Development, launched in May 2005 by His Majesty Mohammed VI, constitutes a pillar of Moroccan social policy. The initiative is based on an integrated approach to development in all its aspects — political, economic, social, environmental and cultural. By building roads, providing energy services and encouraging income-generating activities, the Initiative has achieved concrete results in fighting poverty and exclusion, improving infrastructure and de-marginalizing rural areas.

Collective efforts in the field of development will remain insufficient unless they are accompanied by daring and effective policies for the protection of the environment and concrete measures to mitigate the impact of climate change, which now more than ever is threatening the future of mankind. In that connection, Morocco is convinced that the conference on climate change to be held in Copenhagen in December will undoubtedly constitute an important step towards an international agreement on climate. In that regard, Morocco reiterates the proposal it made at the conference held at Poznan, Poland, in December 2008 for the creation of a multilateral fund for the transfer of technology to the developing countries in order to enable them to deal with the grave implications of climate change.

Mindful of the necessity to operationalize concrete measures to protect the environment and contain the negative impact of climate change, His Majesty Mohammed VI instructed the Government to draft swiftly a comprehensive national environmental charter, with the aim of protecting national resources and reserves as part of a sustainable development policy. The environment should be considered a shared national heritage whose protection is the collective duty of current and future generations. Likewise, Morocco will reactivate its national energy strategy aimed at the development of renewable energy sources and the recycling of waste water.

Convinced that the peace process is the only viable option in the Middle East, the Kingdom of Morocco has participated constructively and responsibly in all efforts of the international community to relaunch the peace process on solid foundations. That means that the process must be in accordance with resolutions of international legality, the previous relevant agreements and commitments among the parties concerned, and the Arab Peace Initiative, which as a realistic option reflects the collective Arab will to arrive at a just and comprehensive solution that guarantees the right of the

Palestinian people to create their own independent State, with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital, an Israeli withdrawal from all occupied Arab territories, including Syrian and Lebanese territories, and a stable, secure and peaceful existence for all peoples of the region.

The Kingdom of Morocco expresses its appreciation to the United States Administration for its efforts and for the encouraging positions taken by President Obama. We hope that it will persevere in order to overcome obstacles to a resumption of negotiations. We also commend all other international efforts, including European efforts, to that end.

Those efforts will be productive only if Israel halts its illegal practices, which prevent the achievement of peace. Those practices, in particular the building of settlements in the occupied Palestinian territories and the unjust blockade against our brotherly Palestinian people, run counter to the peace option. The settlement activities and the expulsions taking place in Al-Quds, aimed at altering the legal and demographic status of that holy city, are flagrant violations of international instruments and require urgent action on the part of all peace-loving countries.

In that regard, His Majesty Mohammed VI, in his capacity as Chairman of the Al-Quds Committee, has always warned the international community against the risks associated with altering the legal status of Al-Quds. He has also been urging the influential international Powers to swiftly implement the requirements of international legitimacy in order to preserve the religious, cultural and spiritual features of the holy city in such a way as to create appropriate conditions conducive to the resumption of the peace process.

The achievement of peace through the peaceful resolution of conflicts is the essence of the historical mandate of the United Nations. It should be based on the principles of equality among States and respect for their independence and territorial integrity, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations. In addition, there is a need to eliminate all weapons of mass destruction and to combat terrorism in all its forms and manifestations.

As a member of the Peacebuilding Commission, Morocco will continue its relevant activities, including by mobilizing efforts in support of African countries. Such efforts are being made within the framework of South-South cooperation, with concrete projects, defined goals and shared benefits and in keeping with the priorities of Moroccan foreign policy as determined by His Majesty King Mohammed VI. As one of the first active participants in United Nations peacekeeping missions, Morocco has always taken a keen interest in United Nations efforts to enhance such operations as part of the new partnership proposed to adapt to international developments and the requirements for lasting peace.

Furthermore, recent developments in the area of disarmament provide reason for optimism. The positions expressed and the statements made at the highest levels augur well and maintain the momentum for disarmament and non-proliferation efforts. We hope that efforts will be made at the international and regional levels for the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, given the outcome of the meeting on article 14 of the Treaty, which I had the honour to co-chair last Thursday with my colleague, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of France.

Since its establishment, the United Nations has endeavoured to promote international and regional cooperation to uphold the principles of coexistence, peace, good-neighbourliness and consultation at a time when regional economic gatherings are playing a pivotal role in addressing economic, security and environmental issues. Convinced of that role, Morocco has taken a keen interest in promoting good-neighbourly relations in nearby African, Maghreb and Mediterranean regions. Likewise, Morocco supports the Mediterranean Union as a promising framework for increasing dialogue and cooperation between the two sides of the Mediterranean. Moreover, on 4 August 2009, mindful of the important role of the Atlantic Ocean and the opportunities it provides for collective action, Morocco launched an initiative aimed at cooperation among African countries bordering the Atlantic as the basis for a broader partnership with other coastal countries in that geo-strategic region.

His Majesty King Mohammad VI has reaffirmed Morocco's strong and enduring resolve to contribute in good faith to the consolidation of the Arab Maghreb Union, the reactivation of its structures and the strengthening of relations among its members, including brotherly Algeria. Indeed, that regional body could play a central role in building fruitful partnerships and in ensuring security and stability in

Africa, the Middle East and the Mediterranean. Our belief that the Arab Maghreb project must be reactivated as an embodiment of our peoples' hopes and aspirations is in keeping with our sincere desire to work to remove all obstacles to the realization of our peoples' expectations and the consolidation of brotherly relations among its five members.

In that regard, Morocco has responded responsibly and in good faith to the appeals of the Security Council for efforts to find a political, lasting and negotiated solution to the regional dispute over the Moroccan Sahara. A bold autonomy initiative, regarded as serious and credible by the international community, has been proposed as a promising and realistic basis for a lasting solution to that artificial conflict.

With the same resolve and responsibility, Morocco, with the support of the Security Council, has been engaged in the new dynamic resulting from its initiative aimed at negotiations under United Nations supervision. In its resolutions 1813 (2008) and 1871 (2009), the Council called for serious and intense negotiations in a spirit of compromise and realism with a view to finding a political, lasting and negotiated solution that is in keeping with the principle of self-determination and that cannot be monopolized by anyone or selectively interpreted to conceal undeclared objectives and a hidden agenda. Morocco will continue its full cooperation with the Secretary-General and his Personal Envoy to find a definitive solution to this regional dispute that fully respects the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Kingdom of Morocco and grants autonomous status to the population of the Sahara provinces, which is likely to ensure their progress and well-being and enable them to manage their domestic affairs in a democratic manner.

The Kingdom of Morocco has always been at the forefront of international and regional initiatives aimed at promoting the values of dialogue, tolerance and openness to others, especially as they relate to the necessary dialogue between Islam and the West and to respecting universal human rights standards, as prevalent as they are all over the world.

Based on those convictions, Morocco will continue to promote its fruitful cooperation and positive dialogue at the bilateral, regional and global levels. Motivated by the same spirit of commitment, the Kingdom of Morocco will assume its responsibility and will play its role fully within the main United Nations bodies, with a view to reinforcing the Organization's efficiency, credibility and contribution.

May the blessings, peace and mercy of Allah be upon all participants.

The meeting rose at 2.55 p.m.